Marjorie Williams on Why Parents Still Matter

The Washington Monthly

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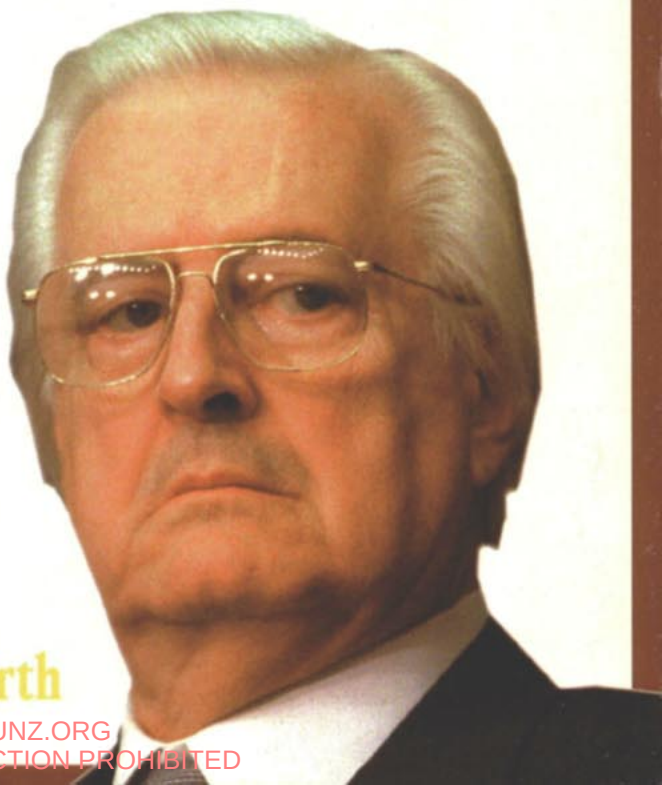
Reinventing Social Security

Reviews by David Garrow and Michael Lind

Beth Austin on Lipstick Feminism

Another Side of Henry Hyde



by Robert Worth

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Why Our Union Won't Be Giving To United Way This Year.

"Last year, members of Pipefitters Local 602 helped Habitat for Humanity construct five, two-story homes in southeast Washington, DC for low-income families. Apprentice Paul Grant said 'you always wonder how to give back to the community, and this is a great way to do it.' His comment typifies the attitude of UA members all across North America.

There is a full-page feature on the inside front cover of every issue of our UA Journal entitled 'The Heart of the UA' that chronicles the acts of charity of individual locals around the country. We believe in giving!

That is why it disappoints me to pull our union out of United Way, because since its inception organized labor and its millions of members have been staunch supporters.

The genius of United Way has been its ability to bring every facet of the nation together for united giving—including business and labor.

United Way has never been political, and neither union nor corporate officials who participate in United Way ever endeavored to misuse the organization for political reasons.

That ended this past spring. When United Way's policy staff issued a stinging rebuke of Prop. 226 in California, (the so-called "Paycheck Protection Act") anti-union employers supporting the Act were furious. They demanded that United Way repudiate the staff report. And the United Way leadership caved to their demand.

What United Way rescinded was a staff warning that Prop. 226 was so poorly drafted it would "cause a variety of adverse consequences for nonprofits."

The Chronicle of Philanthropy, the nation's leading publication on charitable giving, agreed, informing readers that Prop. 226 "is written so broadly that it applies not only to union dues, but also to charitable contributions."

This was a message anti-union employers didn't want to hear, so they brought pressure on United Way to deny what every responsible person knew to be true: that Prop. 226 was hazardous to the health of every charity.

United Way took the corporate side on a political issue critical to working families all across America. California voters wisely defeated Prop. 226—no thanks to United Way.

Our union will in no way reduce its charitable giving—we'll simply give elsewhere, and the new endeavor we are proud to support is the Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis.

Martin J. Maddaloni
General President

We will resume support but not until the United Way leaders restore their pledge to the slogan **"Labor Cares-Labor Shares."**

THE PLUMBERS, PIPEFITTERS & SPRINKLERFITTERS UNION · UA · UNITED ASSOCIATION

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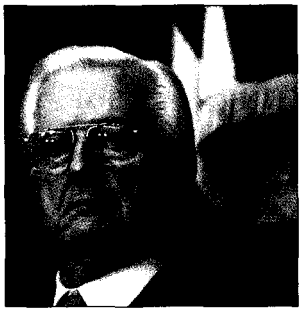

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NewsMakers

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Letters

Bad Connections

Seth Grossman's miserable luck in getting through to government telephones is old news that's still bad news ("Sorry, Wrong Number," Seth Grossman, September 1998). Mr. Grossman will forgive me, I hope, if I make his news worse than he thought. His one bright spot, his call to the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral service, was not a call to a government telephone or employee. A private firm runs ADEAR under contract with the National Institute on Aging. Amazingly, and doubtless dishearteningly, he called a civilian, and that's why he got civil service.

BUDD WHITEBOOK
via e-mail

Even an intern, but certainly his editor, should know that there is no such agency as the Federal Drug Administration. The name that he didn't even have a clue he should have been searching for is the Food and Drug Administration.

By the way, ever try to make a simple call to your electric utility? Your bank? Your newspaper? Need I go on?

TED HOPES
via e-mail

Too Many Secrets

John J. Fialka ("Secrets and Lies," September 1998) tells us that Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan's new book on secrecy is "a refreshing antidote to the academic mush and axe-grinding left-wing criticism that make up much of what is a thin literature on the effectiveness of U.S. intelligence agencies." If so, it is an antidote to a non-existent malady.

There is no left wing criticism of the effectiveness of U.S. intelligence agencies. To the contrary, self-identified leftists have argued that U.S. intelligence is extraordinarily effective, albeit in the service of improper or immoral ends. The image of a ubiquitous, omnipotent Central Intelligence Agency has been a staple, indeed a cliché, of left-wing literature around the globe for decades. All of the axe-grinding criticism of the effectiveness of U.S. intelligence has been on the right. For example, Angelo Codevilla, who is a conservative academic but a distinctively unmushy one, has authored some devastating criticism of the CIA in Mr. Fialka's own *Wall Street Journal*. Anne H. Cahn has a new book (advertised in the *Monthly*) on the "Team B" affair of the 1970's which is entitled *Killing Detente: The Right Attacks the CIA*. The CIA was actually impugned back then, she reminds us, for supposedly underestimating the Soviet threat.

For all of its criticisms of U.S. intelligence, however, the political right in Congress and elsewhere has been a stubborn obstacle to reform. Incredibly, before the CIA was compelled by a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit to disclose the size of the total intelligence budget last year, majorities in both the House and Senate voted to oppose such disclosure. If excessive secrecy is undermining the national interest, at least we know who is responsible.

STEVEN AFTERGOOD
DIRECTOR-PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT SECRECY
FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS
Washington DC

Rent Wrongs

You cite ("Tilting," September 1998) the Kraus empire's use of allegedly overpriced services from related companies to increase the apparent expenses of its Bedford Gardens apartment complex and therefore qualify for greater rent increases and subsidies as evidence of the need for more, rather than less, economic regulation. Although I tend to agree with your larger point, in my view the Bedford Gardens story illustrates the difficulties with economic regulation. If rents in New York City were deregulated, Kraus would be permitted to charge whatever the market would bear without the necessity of proving excess expenses. Similarly, if there were no government subsidies, there would be no reason for Kraus to try to reduce his apparent profits. He therefore would have no incentive to obtain services at other than the lowest price.

PAUL SLEVEN
via e-mail

Not Here

Michelle Cottle is to be commended for raising provocative questions in "Too Well Endowed?"(September 1998). One hopes, however, that Ms. Cottle's understanding of the other private universities she mentions is greater than her knowledge of Rice University.

She cites Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Princeton, Duke and Rice as "some of the most respected (and most expensive) institutions around." About such universities, she claims "that undergrads and their parents are subsidizing the programs that divert university attention away from undergrads." She also quotes approvingly from a Carnegie Foundation April report: "University recruitment materials display proudly the world-famous professors, the splendid facilities, and the ground breaking research that goes on within them, but thousands of students graduate without ever seeing the world-famous professors." She also cites heavy debt burdens as typical of "graduates of top universities."

For Rice University, the facts do not match up all that well with the impressions conveyed. Tuition at Rice, averaging $13,706, is far below the figures noted in the article. Few pay even this amount, owing to our quite liberal financial aid policies. And while we do subsidize research heavily at Rice, we do that from our endowment income, not with net tuition dollars, which cover only 10 percent of our costs.

I note also that our undergraduates are well acquainted with top faculty. At Rice, graduate students teach less than 5 percent of our classes. Moreover, our two Nobel laureates in chemistry were teaching freshmen in chemistry when they were awarded the prize in 1996.

Finally, according to *US News and World Report*, Rice students graduate with debt burdens notably lighter than any private college or university, and lower than all but twelve state univer-

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sities. This past year we placed a limit on the total amount of need-based debt for our students. No student entering this year will owe more than $9,600 in debt by graduation. This maximum compares very well with the average debt elsewhere: according to the GAO it was $11,554 for public school seniors in 1995-96, for private schools it was $15,599.

MALCOLM GILLIS
PRESIDENT
RICE UNIVERSITY
Houston, TX

Still Alive

In his review (September 1998) of *The Living Wage*, my new book with Stephanie Luce, Paul Krugman seeks to discredit the arguments we make on behalf of living wage legislation. Much is at stake here. The living wage movement represents the most widespread grassroots effort to reverse the sharp 25-year decline in minimum wages, to a level today, $5.15 an hour, that is fully 30 percent below its peak of $7.37 (in 1997 dollars) in 1968. Krugman claims that the living wage movement is "doomed to fail," because neither we authors nor the broad living wage movement can get our economics right.

Our research showed that most firms holding municipal contracts would face a negligible increase in their total costs (on the order of one percent) once they comply with living wage laws. We therefore argued that most affected firms would readily absorb these costs rather than pass them on to city budgets. Krugman calls this "wishful thinking of the highest order," stating that firms will always pass along costs to their customers no matter how small. But in the competitive bidding environment in which these firms operate, governments need not cave in to business demands for better contract terms to cover their living wage costs.

Will living wage laws cause unemployment? Krugman rehashes the standard argument that when you raise wages, demand for workers must fall. But even Krugman acknowledges the qualifying feature of this law, which is that it holds only when all else is assumed constant. In the real world, all else is rarely constant. Among other factors, the impact on jobs of fluctuations in the demand for goods and services produced in the region will overwhelm any effect stemming from a municipal living wage law.

Krugman asks: Why not let the market rip, allowing income disparities to arise where they may, but then alleviate them through government transfer payments? In making such an argument, Krugman dismisses the distinction we draw between income earned through wages and income earned through government transfers. In the protracted debate over welfare reform, it became clear that, given the choice, the vast majority of Americans would prefer to work for a decent wage than to receive government payments. Krugman would deny people their preference in the interests of an unfettered market. But taxing market winners to pay for transfer payments to market losers also distorts market outcomes. Krugman never explains why this market interference is more just and efficient than allowing people to earn a living wage.

Krugman concludes that "the amorality of the market economy is part of its essence, and cannot be legislated away." But economists from Adam Smith onwards have recognized that market economies—dominated as they are by greed and competition—can survive over time only if they are buttressed by social institutions that also support our inclinations toward solidarity and reciprocity.

When the national minimum wage was at its peak in 1968, it had become a reasonably effective vehicle for eliminating poverty among people who worked full-time while trying to raise a family. It is unfortunate that, over the past generation, the country has abandoned this achievement even though our country is now 50 percent more productive than in 1968, and that economists such as Krugman loosely invoke "economic laws" to justify our dramatic steps backward.

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Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

Clinton's Candor • Surplus Scientists • Libertarian Lunacy • Push Polling • Starr's Disingenuous "explicitly"

"SALES OF SUPERMARKET TABloids have gone down since the Lewinsky matter surfaced in January," reports Jennifer Harper in the *Washington Times*. "The *National Enquirer*, the *Star*, and the *Globe* have lost respectively 18.8 percent, 14.4 percent, and 18.9 percent of their readship." This should surprise no one. Their act had been taken over lock, stock, and barrel by the major media, including our most respected newspapers.

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"DELAWARE THANKS YOU, Maryland," says a current television commercial. Thanks for what? For not having slot machines at Maryland race tracks as Delaware does. The ad is not paid for by Delaware. It is sponsored by the Maryland Jockey Club which wants to have slot machines at Maryland race tracks. It tells the people of Maryland, "You lose revenue for schools by not permitting slot machines at race tracts."

This is not one of the glories of the American federal system. Too often, it pits one state against another. "If they allow gambling we must or we'll lose revenue." If other states allow industries to pollute air and water, we must do the same or lose business to them. If they tax business less than its fair share we must do the same to keep the businesses that might leave. "Delaware does it" should not excuse a bad policy in Maryland, but consider how many times have you heard state rivalry used to justify a wrong public policy.

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IN 1974 THE HOUSE JUDICIARY Committee was determining what charges should be brought against Richard Nixon as grounds for impeachment. Even though there was evidence that Nixon had committed tax fraud by withholding documents that qualified him for tax deductions of hundreds of thousands of dollars, the committee voted 26-12 that he should not be impeached for tax fraud. Why? According to Robert F. Drinan and Wayne Owens, who were on the committee, "because it did not involve official conduct."

Fifty thousand criminal cases were begun last year by the federal government. How many of them were about perjury? Eighty-seven.

This is the same reason President Clinton should not be impeached. But his behavior in the Lewinsky matter has been bad enough to merit some punishment. In June, we recommended rebuke by the Congress. Last month, former president Gerald Ford made the same recommendation in the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*. This is the answer. We want Bill Clinton to know we the people don't like what he did, but we want to put this matter behind us so we can go on to deal with the problems confronting the country and the world.

The chance that further hearings will develop significant additional evidence of guilt is minimal. After all, the Starr-Fiske team has devoted almost five years to investigating the president. My guess is that most of the new material will be the exculpatory evidence that was left out of the Starr report.

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AMONG THE EXCULPATORY material is the evidence developed by Jill Abramson and Don Van Natta Jr. of *The New York Times* that a network of conservative lawyers conspired to form a link between Paula Jones' lawyers, Linda Tripp, and Starr's team of prosecutors.

But the exculpatory evidence that fascinates me the most is Monica Lewinsky's "no one asked me to lie" statement, which she volunteered at the end of the grand jury testimony. I can see the look of dismay on the faces of the Starr prosecutors as their case sank right there. They had to conceal it in the report, which they did by saying she did not "explicitly" say she had been asked to lie. How disingenuous can you get! She not only didn't explicitly say she had been asked to lie, she explicitly said she had *not* been asked to lie.

Ken Starr's defenders emulate his disningenuousness. Consider a *Washington Post* editorial taking Starr's side on the issue of whether he misrepresented Lewinsky's "no one asked me to lie." The *Post* said, "Mr. Starr's report paraphrased her statement, and it does not allege any such direct requests." The editorial avoids the "explicitly" problem by not mentioning it. Thus

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Post readers are left with no basis for understanding the way in which Starr was misleading.

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THE UNITED STATES HAS SPENT $5.8 *trillion* on its nuclear weapons program since 1940—more than it has spent on any other program except social security, according to a recent study by the Brookings Institution. One hopes this news is reported in India, Pakistan, and other nations playing or contemplating the possibility of playing the nuclear game. They also should know that the expense of making and deploying the weapons is far from being the whole story. Stephen Schwartz, the scholar who conducted the study, says "cleanup costs may be as much as the weapons cost in the first place."

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SENATOR RUSSELL FEINGOLD, the Wisconsin Democrat who is running for reelection this fall, is the latest victim of push-polling, an especially nasty political trick. The voter is given a negative information, often false or misleading, about the candidate, in the form of a question about how he will vote. One Wisconsin voter was asked if she would vote for Feingold if she knew he was going to "dip into money in the Social Security [trust fund], and it was going to be sent to Russia for the space monkey project." Another man was asked "if I'd vote for a senator who spent money on a study on cow flatulence."

A spokesman for Feingold's opponent told *The Hill*'s Robert Schlesinger: "First of all, we don't do push-polling. Second of all, we don't know anything about it." The first of this statements is no doubt true. Usually, smart candidates avoid doing dirty tricks themselves. The spokesman's second sentence is less likely to be true. Usually someone in the campaign knows about or is actually coordinating dirty tricks played by the campaign's allies.

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DANIEL GREENBERG WRITES AN interesting column on science that doesn't get the attention it deserves. Recently, he reported on the glut of Ph.D.s in biology and other sciences. Why have universities continued to overproduce these Ph.D.s despite many warnings? The reason is that teaching the new Ph.D. candidates supports the professors who run the guilty departments. And once the excess scientists are in the job market, they provide a cheap labor pool to provide assistants to help tenured professors do their research.

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"NOW MANY PROGRESSIVES, who had no problem with the media investigating the heck out of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, are *shocked* that journalists are applying the same treatment to President Clinton," writes Howard Kurtz, the media critic for *The Washington Post*. The same treatment? By the beginning of this year, I would guess, the press had devoted more space to allegations against Clinton than to all the investigations of Reagan and Bush combined. And that coverage has been dwarfed by the space devoted to the Monica Lewinsky story just this year.

The irony is that the Monica Lewinsky story concerned lying and covering up lies about sex, where Iran-Contra, as James Fallows pointed out in our last issue, involved lies and cover ups about matters of state, about this government's relations with foreign governments. Why doesn't Kurtz add up the columns devoted by *The Washington Post* to Iran-Contra and the columns it has devoted to the Lewinsky case? That would make a very interesting story.

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SPEAKING OF EQUAL TIME FOR scandals, you had to love the way *The Washington Post* buried "Justice Looked at GOP Votes on Tobacco." The story was given half of one column about seven inches down the right side of page 11 even though it told of a Justice Department investigation of possible bribery of Republican senators by the tobacco companies. Specifically, the allegation was that the tobacco companies promised to run ads helpful to Republicans who voted against the bill. Bribery, in contrast to consensual sex, or even lying about consensual sex, is a crime that involves the public duties of public officials.

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AND SPEAKING OF THE POST, one of its reporters wanted me to join in attacking Clinton's cover-up of his adultery. I mentioned a very highly-placed person at the *Post* who had recently been guilty of the same sin, and she said "we can't talk about that." How many *Post* employees justify that cover-up while condemning Clinton's?

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I KNOW ALL THIS SOUNDS LIKE I'm picking on the *Post*. I don't intend to. It's just that it offers this month's juiciest examples. Its offenses against Bill Clinton are no worse than those of the media in general. At its best, it is much better than most, having won our Monthly Journalism Award, at last count, more than any other paper.

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THE INGENUITY OF THE LEGAL profession in coming up with new reasons for suing someone is a tribute to creative power of the human mind. Consider two cases recently instituted by Ronald Benjamin, a lawyer in Binghamton, New York. In one he is claiming damages for some people who took diet drugs, based not on the harm the drugs did to them, but on the anxiety his clients experienced when they learned the drugs had harmed others. In another case, Benjamin is suing Pfizer, according to Richard Schmitt of the *Wall Street Journal*, on the claim that "Viagra made his client, who was driving home from a date, run into a tree." Mr. Ben-

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jamin prepared himself for his career in law by serving a stretch for grand larceny at Sing Sing. This seems appropriate. After all, the values imparted by that institution are not very different from those American law schools inculcate in their alumni.

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SPEAKING OF LAWSUITS, ONE ON behalf of four college teachers in West Virginia cost the taxpayers $603,608 because a state institution had been at fault. What upset *The Charleston Gazette* was how the pot was divvied up. The professors got $220,000. Their lawyer got $170,000, and the state's law firm $213,608.

"Delaware does it" should not excuse a bad policy in Maryland.

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THAT 1997 TURBOPROP CRASH near Detroit that killed the 29 people aboard could have been prevented, according to officials of the National Transportation Safety Board. New de-icing procedures had been developed by the plane's manufacturer after a similar crash in 1994. But the FAA had not ordered airlines using the plane to implement them. Why? According to Matthew Wald of *The New York Times*, "While one branch of the FAA had approved the plan, that information did not get to the branch that would have made it a requirement for pilots."

There is an answer to this problem. In cases where the NTSB is convinced that lives are endangered, give it the power to order the FAA to take action. The FAA is cumbersome and slow to act. The NTSB is faster, smarter, and less a pawn of the airlines.

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STILL ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION of our point that more often than not what we need is not less regulation but regulation that is tougher and smarter. After the FDA's Dr. Rudolf Widmark found evidence that the drug Duract caused more liver-cell damage than any other similar medication available, the FDA let the drug's manufacturer, Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, talk it into downplaying the danger. The only caution given people who took the drug, according to the *Wall Street Journal*'s Rochelle Sharpe, was "a mild warning about potential dangers printed in tiny type in the 19th paragraph of the 56-paragraph label that accompanied the drug's packaging."

What happened as a result? After four death and eight cases requiring liver transplants, Wyeth pulled the drug off the market.

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TWO MORE EXAMPLES WHERE WE need more regulation: 1. furniture, where the Consumer Products Commission does not require either flame retardant or the use of non-flammable material in the manufacture of furniture. 2. dietary supplements ranging from vitamins to the androstenedione that Mark McGwire takes, which the FDA cannot regulate until harm actually occurs, at which time the product still remains on sale until the FDA completes its testing and proves its case against the supplement in court.

Regulation of the furniture industry is resisted by congressmen like Roger Wicker who represent districts with furniture manufacturers. The dietary supplement industry has immense power, having grown, according to *The New York Times*, from $8 billion in sales to $12 billion in just the last four years.

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FOOD IS ANOTHER AREA WHERE greater protection is needed. A new inspection program instituted by the Department of Agriculture has cut the incidence of salmonella contamination nearly in half. But they still have a long way to go. Salmonella, according to one article in *The Washington Post*, "sickens 3.8 million Americans each year."

All food-borne illness combined, according to another article from Reuters, "kills an estimated 9,000 people every year and makes up to 81 million others sick." The National Academy of Sciences has recommended that the White House appoint a food safety chief who would have power over all food safety operations. The power is now divided, with confusing overlapping jurisdictions. "For example," points out Reuters, "the manufacturing of frozen cheese pizza is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, but a frozen pizza with pepperoni ... falls under the Department of Agriculture jurisdiction."

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IN THE PRESIDENT'S MUCH maligned speech the night of his grand jury testimony, there was one statement for which he deserves credit that he has not received. It came when he said, "I did it first of all to protect myself," then "to protect my family." Most politicians would have piously referred only to their family and not even mentioned the desire to save their own skins.

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WHO KILLED CAMPAIGN FINance reform? According to Washington's most highly respected political columnist, David Broder, "It was the adamant opposition of the Republican congressional leadership that ultimately stalled campaign finance legislation." On one critical House roll call, only 61 of 228 House Republicans voted for reform. On another, the count was even worse—only 51 Republicans.

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REPUBLICANS OPPOSE CAMPAIGN finance reform because the present system takes such good care of them. So far the Republicans have raised $260 million for this year's elections compared to the Democ-

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rats' $165 million. In Kentucky their senatorial candidate has raised almost three times as much as his Democratic opponent. In New York, Al D'Amato's lifetime service to the special interests has earned about five times as much money as Schumer has been able to raise.

If it is the Republicans who are the main beneficiaries of the current odious system of campaign finance and it is Republicans who are the principle opponents of reform, why does Howell Raines want to investigate the Democrats? Raines, the editorial page editor of *The New York Times*, has been pressuring Janet Reno to appoint an independent counsel to investigate Clinton-Gore fund raising. This would surely result in a presidency that would continue under prosecutorial assault until January 20, 2001.

Even if Raines fails to bend Reno to his will, he has another strategy for making sure Clinton will continue to be investigated ad infinitum. He is urging Henry Hyde to expand the impeachment procedings to include "any credible evidence" against Clinton on Whitewater, Filegate, and Travelgate.

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EVEN THOUGH THE REPUBLICANS torpedoed campaign finance reform, as well as the administration's efforts to protect kids from tobacco, rebuild crumbling schools, and give HMO patients a bill of rights, they may win the general election. Their voters are hot to repudiate Bill Clinton, and the Democratic turnout does not look promising. Judging by the primaries, it could be a disaster. According to a report by the Center for the Study of the Non-Voter, Democratic turnout set new record lows in 20 states in the 1998 primaries. Republicans by contrast had new lows in only three states, which were more than offset by new highs in Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, and North Carolina.

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A YEAR OR SO AGO, THE WASH*ington Post Magazine* launched a feature called "The Fine Print." It was an obvious rip-off of our Memo of the Month, which has been a *Monthly* feature for 29 years. We wondered why all those bright fellows over at the *Post* couldn't think of their own ideas and not have to steal one from the *Monthly*. But instead of being angry, we decided to be flattered and have since followed the *Post*'s effort with interest. Sometimes, we have to admit, they do a dandy job. Just last month they came up with a press release from the Ayn Rand Institute calling for students to volunteer to oppose volunteerism. This has to be the high water mark of libertarian lunacy.

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JOE LOCKHART HAS A PET PEEVE that we share. When Bill Clinton tries to address the major problems of this country and the world, it is reported with leads such as: "In an attempt to divert attention," or "In an effort to appear presidential." Another version of the tactic comes in the reports that "Lewinsky scandal dogs Clinton in Russia" or "Clinton dogged by Monica story in Northern Ireland." Did Russian reporters or Irish reporters ask a lot of questions about the scandal? The answer is no. The questions were asked by reporters working for news services used by American editors. In other words, it was the American press that was dogging Clinton.

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HAVE YOU EVER FELT YOU WERE falling asleep while driving? I did once and it remains a terrifying memory. I was so desperate that I turned up the radio to full volume and started slapping myself. I was too stupid to think of pulling over the side of the road; but even this is sometimes not possible because of the nature of the highway or the unsafe area you're driving through. I was lucky enough to get home safely but an awful lot of people aren't so fortunate. The result is an estimated 200,000 asleep-at-the-wheel accidents each year.

Many of the victims don't even realize they are drifting off. There may be an answer to that problem. A "sleep alarm" has been has been developed by a company in New Mexico that sounds a warning if a driver's eyes close. According to a letter written to *Business Week*, "General Motors 'studied it for a full year and finally turned it down at the board level, we were told, because it might fail and lead to more lawsuits.'"

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FIFTY THOUSAND CRIMINAL cases were begun last year by the federal government. How many of them were about perjury? Eighty-seven.

"As prosecutors, we encounter people who lie under oath all the time," a prosecuting attorney recently told Roberto Suro and Bill Miller of *The Washington Post*. "A day doesn't go by when somebody doesn't come to court and bend it a little. If you were determined to prosecute every falsehood people made in court, that is all you would be doing."

One clear justification for prosecuting perjury is when the lie covers up a crime. Bill Clinton lied to cover up consensual sex. Consensual sex is not a crime. "Covering up an affair is a universal impulse," writes Jonathan Rauch in the *National Journal*. "The proper response is disapproval, not prosecution." Or as Maureen Dowd, not usually a Clinton defender, puts it, "These are not grounds for impeachment; these are grounds for divorce."

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LET ME MAKE CLEAR THAT I DO not believe "everybody does it" should excuse adultery. It should not. What it should do, however, is moderate the righteousness we bring to the criticism of others. The moral fervor would be better directed at an effort to improve our own behavior.

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Lipstick Feminists

Sexual power is a pistol loaded with only one bullet

By Elizabeth Austin

I feel kind of sorry for Monica Lewinsky. It's not that I consider her a victim, by any stretch; when a young woman heads to Washington with the expressed intention of earning her presidential kneepads, she forfeits any future right to claims of sexual exploitation. But neither do I see Lewinsky as a post-feminist power girl, wielding her feminine wiles in a brazen bid for an easy G-15 rating. To me, she's just a painfully sentimental, pathologically vulnerable, sexually available young woman who honestly believed her expensive haircut and starry gaze were enough to bring the Leader of the Free World to his knees. If I weren't a feminist, I guess I'd call her a pathetic little slut.

That's a hard thing for me to admit, and a difficult word for me to use. But over the last few months, I've been horrified to hear a soprano chorus of "lipstick feminists" crow over the exploits of Monica the Power Babe. In one recent *New York Times* op-ed, headlined "Monica Lewinsky, Career Woman," Katie Roiphe complained that we lack a term for "the opposite of sexual harassment, when a person of less power uses her sexual attractiveness or a personal relationship with a person of greater power to get ahead." Frustrated by her stalled career, Roiphe reports, Lewinsky "used her personal power over the President to get results," threatening him with public exposure if he didn't land her a new job, pronto.

"There is nothing inherently wrong with Ms. Lewinsky's way of thinking, or with her attempt to translate her personal relationship with the President into professional advancement," comments Roiphe, who is apparently unfamiliar with the legal concept of blackmail. "It is a time-honored female tradition to use sexual power as a way to try to improve one's position in the world. . . ."

That vision of the sexually unrestricted female as power broker has been getting a lot of play lately, and there's just enough truth in it to make it dangerous. God knows, we're all now painfully aware that powerful men can be rendered foolish and incompetent by sexual desire. And we've all seen second-rate Cleopatras convert their perilously high heels and profoundly deep decolletages into cars and condos—or at least, a promotion from bus girl to waitress.

But sexual power is a pistol loaded with only one bullet. Sure, Monica probably felt like Wonder Woman the first time the President beckoned her toward his gaping zipper. And when their sordid little liaison petered out, I'm certain she lay awake at night constructing elaborate scenarios in which L'Affaire Lewinsky would tumble the presidency, leaving her perched triumphantly atop the *New York*

Elizabeth Austin, *a Chicago-based writer, is writing a book about civility.*

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Times bestseller list. But look how it's all turned out: She's housebound and unemployable, while he still gets to decide which women are Secretary of State material and which are merely potential humidors. So how much real power did Monica ever wield?

The problem with Roiphe and the sisterhood of sluts is that they lack historical perspective. A couple of generations ago, the halls of government teemed with Lewinskys—called "monkey girls" (at least in Illinois), because they hung on to their jobs with their tails. Down in Springfield, the monkey girls observed a touching Sabbath ritual: Every Friday night, they'd line up at the railroad station to kiss their lawmaking lovers goodbye as they left to spend the weekend at home with their constituents—and their wives.

Back then, the definitions were clear—the men were studs, and their women were sluts. And when the monkey girls found themselves on the mossy side of 35 with neither resumés nor reputations, society's judgment was bleak: You made your bed, now lie in it.

That double standard became a rallying cry for the women's movement, which battled to redefine sex roles and insisted on women's equal right to sexual gratification. But when the sisters declared sluthood obsolete, they found themselves lacking the vocabulary to describe fetching young women who managed to snag jobs as statehouse typists and stenographers without submitting to the drudgery of secretarial school.

It was a dilemma with an obvious solution—blame the men. So radical feminism redefined all of heterosex as a species of rape. On paper, it all made perfect sense: Sex is power, men are oppressors, women are victims. So the feminists set out to save the monkey girls from themselves.

That crusade continues even today. In a rather sweet news release issued last January, the National Organization for Women called on the nation's male public officials to swear off the sexual spoils system. "Whether the boss is a county supervisor or the President of the United States, no public official should take advantage of the aphrodisiac of power," NOW President Patricia Ireland insisted. "We must demand that public officials, at all levels and in all branches of government, pledge to reject sexually intimate relationships with employees/volunteers."

Certainly, there were always plenty of feminists—myself included—who managed to draw a distinction between consensual sex and rape. But the insistence that women who traded sex for other types of favors were really victims put off a generation of younger post-feminists who couldn't reconcile the sex-as-rape paradigm with their own lusty manipulation of befuddled menfolk. They went public with the once-guilty pleasures of mascara and silk stockings, and filled long reams with swaggering accounts of their own sexual appeal and exploits.

In short, they were a bunch of horny broads, looking for a few good men. And the President definitely qualified on that score. As Roiphe cooed in a *New York Observer* panel discussion, "This virile president is suddenly fulfilling this forbidden fantasy of this old-fashioned, taboo aggressive male. I think women are finding that appealing." Any suggestion that Lewinsky was at a distinct power disadvantage during her Oval Office amours was just old-fashioned.

Unfortunately, the details of the Lewinsky-Clinton sexual encounters don't support a vision of Monica as Mata Hari. Despite her eagerness and her Altoids, Lewinsky failed to squeeze any favors—political or sexual—from her ever ambivalent partner. Instead, she ended up with no penny and no candy, marking "Dump Day" with a tearful temper tantrum at the White House gates. It's a real stretch to define that relationship as a mutual exercise in passion and pleasure.

I can understand why young women are impatient with a blanket definition of sex as exploitation. But to substitute a new stereotype of sex as aerobics is equally unsatisfying. While it may soothe your self-respect to redefine your sexual misadventures and miscues as simple exercises in self-discovery, the lipstick feminists don't seem to understand that it takes two, not only to tango, but to distinguish a tango from a foxtrot.

Sex can never be unilaterally defined. If one of you thinks you're redefining yourself as a sexually vivid and liberated person, and the other is rejoicing in disbelief that he got some without even having to pop for dinner—you're both right. And society has a legitimate interest in helping the two of you figure out precisely what you're up to.

Because we've been dealing with definitions based on ideology rather than reality, we get all discombobulated when we try to talk about sex and power. Instead of addressing a case like the Clinton-Lewinsky affair on its own demerits, we try desperately to twist the facts to make it fit our own sexual doctrines. But in looking at this particular pair of sexual nincompoops, we don't really see an exploiter and his victim, or a temptress and her prey, or even two adults freely engaging in some mutually enjoyable

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hanky panky. What we have here are a couple of sluts.

Back during the Clarence Thomas debacle, women used the catchphrase: "They just don't get it." Well, in this case, nobody gets it. Because sexuality isn't an it. Sex is a them, a those, a this, that and the other. It means different things to different people at different times. What Clinton and Lewinsky were doing together had nothing to do with rape—and nothing to do with the high poetry of the Book of Common Prayer's "With my body, I thee worship." It's incredibly easy to make that distinction—once you accept the basic premise that we as a society are entitled to make sexual judgments, of both men and women, when their behavior affects our own lives.

In our own experience, we know that sex is sometimes completely private, and sometimes overwhelmingly public. (If you've ever been nine months pregnant, you know exactly what I mean.) Sex can be healing and life-affirming; sex can be degrading and disgusting. We've all known plenty of men who use their positions of power to take advantage of vulnerable women. We've also known misguided sexual opportunists like Lewinsky, and we've seen the damage they do to themselves and others.

We have no trouble denouncing Clinton's sexual escapades; he's the original Venus fly-trap, and most of us despise him a little for it. So why do we get all tongue-tied when we try to describe women who behave the same way? If it's wrong for a man to demand oral sex during a job interview, it's wrong for a woman to offer it. If it's wrong for a man to unzip his trousers in front of an employee, it's wrong for a woman to show her boss her underpants. If it's wrong to be a womanizer, it's wrong to be a manizer. It's that simple.

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At Home Abroad

Why it's time to reform the Foreign Service

BY ALEXANDRA STARR

In the early '90s, American foreign service officers could not get enough of Mexican President Carlos Salinas. They marveled at his free-market economic reforms and vigorous promotion of the North American Free Trade Agreement. They were pleased he had done away with the *Yanquí*-go-home rhetoric that had long been a staple of Mexican politics. When Salinas' term ended, the United States pushed him as the next president of the World Trade Organization.

Then all hell broke loose. The Mexican currency lost almost half of its value in less than a month. The Zapatista guerrillas staged a rebellion in Chiapas. As the crisis deepened, it became apparent that American foreign service officers—FSOs—had been grossly mistaken in their analysis. Far from being Mexico's savior, Salinas had presided over what was probably the most corrupt administration in the country's history.

How did our foreign service officers misread Mexico so drastically? You can't pin the faulty reporting on inadequate staffing: 479 Americans were stationed in the country in 1994, according to the General Accounting Office. Add the locals employed by our embassy and eight other diplomatic posts in Mexico, and you have 1,252 people working for Uncle Sam south of the border. As former Assistant Secretary of State Bill Maynes points out, huge staffs do not ensure top notch analysis. "Our Foreign Service could be much smaller," says Maynes. "But it has to become a more focused and better trained organization." FSOs, he continues, should receive in-depth instruction in the language, culture, and history of the country of their assignment and spend several years on their overseas tours. "If we invested in our foreign service officers that way," he concludes, "we would not have made the mistake we did with Salinas."

The point of Maynes' suggestions is to improve FSOs' understanding of foreign countries. The Service doesn't have to master all of the technical issues crowding today's foreign agenda. U.S. domestic agencies have been setting up shop in our embassies to monitor everything from immigration (Immigration and Naturalization Service) to the spread of infectious diseases (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)—and Maynes says that's fine. The State Department will never compete with the FBI in apprehending terrorists, or with the Federal Aviation Agency when it comes to inspecting planes, he points out. What foreign service officers *can* do better than anyone else is provide policy makers in Washington with a broad picture of the political and social situation in foreign countries.

That is not an easy job. Our diplomats must be prepared to gauge the reaction of Asian societies to economic austerity measures. They should be able to explain the power struggles among the Chinese political elite. And they will have to understand the chasm between the position of the Saudi Arabian government on terrorism and the views of the country's militant classes. Shoddy diplomacy extracts big costs: in Mexico the price tag came in the form of a $20 billion bailout package. And at this point, it's not clear whether our overseas presence is solid enough to make sure a disaster like Mexico doesn't happen again.

A World Apart

My first brush with the Foreign Service occurred in Venezuela, where I worked as an economics reporter. I was not an expert in the subject, to put it charitably, and I frequently called specialists in Caracas for help. At one point, I crossed paths with a U.S. Foreign Service officer who lead me through the thornier issues of Latin American monetary policy. A few months later, however, I spoke with his replacement, who seemed even further lost in the quagmire of Venezuelan economics than I was. Far from answering my questions, he asked me to send him some of

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my articles. The officer seemed intelligent and driven, but he mentioned how difficult he found it to understand Venezuelan Spanish. If he could not communicate with the locals, I can only imagine how hard it was for him keep abreast of the news and make the necessary contacts to do substantive reporting.

I never met my telephone acquaintance, but I did come into contact with many of his colleagues. I ran into most of them at the commissary bar, where FSOs would regularly congregate. They were bright and personable, but they seemed to live in a world divorced from Venezuelan society. The majority of them spoke only middling Spanish. With few exceptions, their socializing appeared to be confined to the English-speaking expatriate community. Most of the officers were housed in apartments just a few blocks from the embassy, and as far as I could tell, their day-to-day activities were confined to that small geographic area.

Venezuelans did not have a high opinion of the American embassy staff. Almost everyone I know who applied for a U.S. visa complained about the way they were treated by consular officers, generally the only U.S. diplomats Venezuelans had any contact with. And it was not only would-be travelers who were critical of American representatives. An expatriate business consultant who had lived in Venezuela for years told me that any time he had a problem with customs officials or government bureaucrats, he would attempt to have the British embassy, rather than the American mission, press his claim before the Venezuelan authorities. British officers were more aggressive about cultivating contacts, he said. And in Venezuela, that was the only way to get anything done.

Of course, our embassy in Venezuela is only one of the 250 diplomatic posts the U.S. maintains abroad, and I did not not meet all of our officers there. But many of the flaws I witnessed in our representation seem to be persistent and widespread. Forty years ago, for example, William Lederer and Eugene Burdick delivered a scathing assessment of U.S. diplomacy in *The Ugly American.* Their term for American embassies' narrow social circle—"S.I.G.G., or Social Incest in the Golden Ghetto"—sums up their observations.

If officers cannot speak the language of the country they are assigned to, then they are not reading the local press, nor are they communicating with the guy on the street. Yet in Iran, at the time of the takeover of our embassy in Tehran in 1979, only one in ten of the foreign service officers stationed there was even minimally competent in Farsi. As a junior foreign service officer wrote in *The Washington Monthly*, when he was posted in the U.S. consulate in Bombay in 1991 not one of the American employees spoke Hindi well enough to do more than take a taxi across town. According to a 1989 report (the last comprehensive language audit available from the State Department) only two-thirds of "language designated" positions at U.S. missions abroad are filled by qualified officers. It is worth noting that by the standards of the State Department, "qualified" does not mean fluent. And one-third of the FSO positions abroad are *not* "language designated."

The deficiencies of the State Department are not a mystery in Washington. There have been 90 reports since 1946 on improving and restructuring the organization. The Department, however, clings to inadequate training practices, an outmoded personnel structure, and a quick rotation system that doesn't permit for change where it counts—in the field.

Training Madeline's Finest

If we expect our officers to understand what's going on in Colombia or Cameroon, they will need some training before they are shipped abroad. At a minimum, officers should speak the language of the country of assignment. But the most respected foreign service programs also provide their diplomats with a solid grounding in the history and culture of foreign countries. Take the Japanese diplomatic corps. Upon joining the Service, officers work in Tokyo for one year and subsequently undergo six months of intensive language training. Then, if an officer is learning Chinese, she will study in China for two years, followed by a one-year graduate level course in Asian studies at a first-tier American university. Officers studying French or English will attend foreign universities in France or the United States for two years before beginning their overseas service.

Uncle Sam takes a radically different approach. Once FSOs receive their country assignments, officers generally attend a two-week class on the region of the world to which they will be posted. As its short duration would suggest, the so-called "area studies" course rarely provides more than thumbnail sketches of the countries where officers will be stationed. "You're not going to learn very much about the Congo in an hour and a half talk," says a former officer who has lectured at the Foreign Service Institute.

The crux of the Service's training focuses on language instruction. On paper, it seems more than

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adequate. Officers headed to Russia, for example, will study Russian for up to eleven months, in addition to having the option of attending a weekly class in the country's history and culture. Japanese and Chinese specialists will undergo almost two years of training before they are sent abroad. But for all of the emphasis placed on languages, an awful lot of FSOs who move through the ranks speak nothing but English: Fully one-third of the officers promoted to the Senior Foreign Service between 1986 and 1988 did not have the required proficiency in even one foreign language.

Most FSOs want to pick up some language skills. They are not, however, lining up for classes in economics or environmental policy. As these issues figure prominently in headlines, that may seem odd to the outside observer. But training keeps FSOs out of the field, where supervisors write almost uniformly positive efficiency reports about their subordinates' work. Those reports, not advanced training, are the tickets to promotions. State's ladder to the top, in other words, actually discourages officers from seeking out instruction that would make them better diplomats.

Shoddy diplomacy extracts big costs: in Mexico the price tag came in the form of a $20 billion bailout package.

A Culture of Disdain

The aversion to training is not the only element of Foreign Service orthodoxy that shoots the organization in the foot. The Service's feudal personnel structure is so rigid that it doesn't help officers gain an understanding of the countries they are supposed to be interpreting. And in the words of Tony Quainton, former Director General of the Foreign Service, the sharp distinctions between policy and support staff create "a culture of disdain" that doesn't exactly promote *esprit de corps* in the ranks.

New inductees are introduced to the pecking order the day they are placed in one of four "cones" (administrative, consular, economic, and political). Political and economic officers are the policy elite in the Service. They report on events in the field and negotiate with foreign governments. Administrative personnel are the Service's business managers. They rent and furnish apartments for incoming FSOs, pay the bills, and manage the locals employed at embassies. Consular workers are at the very bottom of the caste system. They issue (or, more often, deny) visas and tend to the needs of U.S. citizens abroad.

The cones system is a rigid method of divvying up work. The Thomas Commission, a 1989 internal review of the State Department, called the cones "airtight": once you are pigeonholed as an economics officer, it's difficult to crossover to the political side. Unfortunately, those sharp divisions do not tally with the real world, where the line between political and economic issues has never been less distinct. Unless officers grasp the niceties of Japan's party politics, for example, it will be nearly impossible to understand the country's response to its banking crisis. Instead of dividing up interconnected issues, the Service would be better off encouraging well-trained FSOs to evaluate the political, economic, and social challenges countries are facing.

That kind of work requires in-depth interpretation. But according to top-ranking officials at State, cables and memos are often summaries of yesterday's newspapers—with the word "classified" branded across the top. Global media will keep policy makers informed of dramatic news. As Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott described in *Foreign Policy* last year, he didn't need political officers in Moscow to tell him about the 1993 thwarted coup against the Russian government: He watched it on CNN. What TV cannot provide is a context for the momentous events—it's up to FSOs to figure out who was behind the attempted overthrow and gauge the support it drew from the Russian public.

To perform that analysis, officers have to be good reporters. They need to be in touch with the man on the street as well as cultivate contacts at the Finance Ministry. The vast majority of our FSOs, however, are more likely to be hermetically sealed inside of U.S. embassies-*cum*-fortresses than mixing with shop keepers or political activists. Consular workers are the exception to the rule: Whether they are manning the visa line or dealing with the aftermath of plane crashes, they are constantly in contact with the local population. Their work, however, doesn't count for much in the State Department's hierarchy. And their resources seem to be spread pretty thin.

Take the task of issuing visas to foreigners. Requests for permits to enter the U.S. have spiked

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Tidbits & Outrages

In California, a man's conviction for first degree burglary for breaking into an occupied dwelling was thrown out because the occupant of the relevant dwelling had died of natural causes minutes before the break-in.

Air Rage

Two Turkish Airlines pilots were fired after getting into a fist fight in the cockpit while arguing over the airplane's altitude.

Is that Judge Lecter or Judge Tyson Presiding?

A West Virginia Judge bit the nose of a defendant who insulted him during a bond reduction hearing.

ROMAN GENN

He was in Deep Cover

A West Virginia state liquor inspector was caught driving under the influence of alcohol and speeding in a state car.

Runway Rage

The head of Cambodia's Chamber of Commerce shot a tire on the parked jet that had flown him to Phnom Penh – revenge against the airline that owned the jet and that had just lost his luggage.

Shepherd of the People

Harare residents have recently complained about Joshua Nkomo, the vice president of Zimbabwe, who is raising more than 100 goats in his official residence.

Next Month: the Weather Channel

Paragon Cable's collection of overdue bills has improved dramatically since the New York cable provider started filling each of the 77 channels its delinquent customers receive with C-SPAN.

If your HMO won't cover it ...

New York spends $700,000 per year on estrogen for its 87 male prison inmates who want to become female.

Their Next Target: Topless Bars

English undercover cops made 17 visits – at a cost of $3,160 – to a massage parlor in order to prove that the owner was breaking the law.

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upwards in recent years. But while junior FSOs now put in more time at visa mills than the traditional 10 month stint, some consular workers say there are still not enough employees to adequately deal with all of the would-be travelers. Former FSO Liisa Ecola said that in the two embassies where she was posted, officers were encouraged to size up applicants in about 15 seconds—hardly enough time to develop a personal rapport with the locals. That is unfortunate, because visa applicants want to leave their country for a reason; picking their brains could teach FSOs a lot about the locals' frustrations. But the time constraints and pressures placed on officers make the job an irritating chore. "It was definitely the worst job I ever had," says Ecola. "I really didn't want to get out of bed in the morning when I had to work the visa line."

The other fundamental part of consular work is tending to the needs of Americans traveling abroad. The officers I spoke with in Venezuela said this can be quite rewarding—cajoling local police into releasing a U.S. citizen from a prison he shouldn't be in is, after all, a worthwhile achievement. Visiting jails and haggling with customs officials, furthermore, provide consular workers with a real sense of how societies tick. But the top brass at State encourage officers to view their consular stint as something to be endured and then forgotten, according to a former FSO. And the data back his observation up—you don't see too many consular officers scaling the ranks to become an ambassador.

Waterbugs Abroad

In his memoirs, Ambassador Charles Bohlen described the challenges he encountered setting up the new American mission in Moscow in the '30s. One day, then-junior officer Bohlen was dispatched to find clothes hangers. "We careened around the muddy streets...in a motorcycle all one day in search [of the] hangers," he wrote. "I had to look up the Russian word—*veselka*—in the dictionary. Eventually, we discovered a limited number...and took them back in triumph." It sounds like an amusing and harmless anecdote. But it also shows how Bohlen and his colleagues dealt with the same frustrations the locals encountered. That exposure provided them with a better understanding of Russian society.

The situation for most of our FSOs today is very different. The Service takes care of its employees–to the point where officers are essentially sheltered from the societies they are supposed to be interpreting. Before American representatives arrive in a foreign country, administrative officers rent and furnish safe and comfortable apartments for them, even in cities like London or Paris. If American staffers get sick, embassy doctors will be dispatched to see them. Those who want to subsist on pizza and Bud can do their shopping at the embassy commissary. With those amenities, it's not too difficult for officers to pretend they're living in Washington, D.C. instead of Dakar, Senegal.

Of course, apartment hunting in Prague or shopping at the local market will not turn officers into Czech experts. Bohlen's impressive expertise in the Soviet Union was not just a product of his motorcycle tours: He studied Russian for several years before he was posted in Moscow, and his diplomatic career focused almost exclusively on that country. In his memoirs, he describes why he decided to specialize, rather than pursue the typical FSO "generalist" track:

> One of the difficulties in the Foreign Service ... was that an officer would spend two, three, or even four years in one country, and then be transferred to another without really having much opportunity to acquire a serious knowledge of the first country's customs, institutions, and history. This skipping around like a waterbug from one country to another had produced a certain superficiality in our career officers.

We can only wonder what Bohlen would make of today's junior officers serving in some foreign countries for as little as 18 months. Shorter stints abroad don't allow FSOs to get a grasp on different societies, but zipping through tours can be career- enhancing in the Service. That's because the more quickly officers transfer from post to post, the more efficiency reports they'll have when they're up for tenure. Instead of rewarding quick turnover, and the superficiality that comes with it, the Service should encourage officers to spend more time on their overseas assignments. Junior FSOs who prove particularly adept observers of India or Bolivia could be pegged as possible future ambassadors or deputy chiefs of mission to those countries. That way, Our Man in New Delhi would have some experience to draw on when he's trying to figure out Indian parliamentary politics.

One reason the Service transfers its diplomats frequently is so they will maintain their objectivity. If FSOs spend too much time in a certain country, the theory goes, they run the risk of becoming advocates for, rather than interpreters of, a foreign society. The worst incidents of "clientism," however, did not occur

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because officers had too-deep roots in a different culture. Rather, the most damaging cases can be traced to FSOs becoming too chummy with the ruling elites of foreign countries. In Iran during the '60s and '70s, for example, FSOs stationed in Tehran socialized almost exclusively with powerful and wealthy Iranians—as a former Ambassador puts it, "those guys were practically in bed with the Shah." That exclusive social circle gave no hint of the unrest building up in the provinces and in poorer classes. As a result, the uprising against the Iranian ruler came as a complete surprise to the American delegation, and our relationship with Iran has floundered ever since.

A more benign version of clientism occurs when an officer becomes so involved with a foreign society that he begins to identify with it. The State Department's Japan experts, for example, are referred to as "the Kiku club," a reference to the chrysanthemum, the national flower of the country. Policy makers in Washington should be aware that FSOs who spend more than a few years on an overseas assignment may adopt the views of their hosts as their own. But it is preferable for officers to be too immersed in a different culture than be removed from it. If FSOs can write comprehensive country reports, the fact that their recommendations are tilted may not be so important; policy makers in Washington will have the information they need to reach their own conclusions. They will never get that insight from officers who don't know what is going on outside the gates of a U.S. embassy.

It is, of course, tempting to hole up in U.S. compounds. Car jackings and street theft are very common in many cities. But the recent bombings of our two embassies in East Africa demonstrate that Americans may not even be safe in U.S. buildings. Danger is a fact of life in the Foreign Service. Officers who join our diplomatic corps agree to serve anywhere in the world. Those who cannot keep that commitment should quit. The last thing they should do is withdraw from the communities they are supposed to decipher.

Ironically, it is the very threat of terrorism that illustrates the importance of maintaining contact with citizens of foreign societies. It may be, as former Assistant Secretary of State Maynes points out, that it is the role of the FBI to apprehend terrorists. But effectively combating terrorism requires more than capturing individual perpetrators. We need to discern the underlying factors that lead people to turn to violence. That type of understanding can only come from foreign service officers who interact with people of the countries in which they serve. And to do that, officers will have to move out of fortress embassies, and onto the street.

The Arthur Andersen Touch

Running a U.S. embassy is a task that could strain the talents of a Fortune 500 president. The U.S. ambassador and the deputy chief of mission (DCM) must deal with constant staff rotation, understand and abide by both U.S. and host-country regulations, and manage budgets that can top several million dollars. In addition, roughly two out of three embassy workers do not work for the State Department. They report to domestic agencies in Washington, and it can take a firm hand to make sure everyone knows the ambassador is in charge. What sort of preparation do DCMs (who are in charge of the day-to-day operations of an embassy) receive before they take over their posts? They attend a two-week course in management at the Foreign Service Institute. "The general belief at State is that when you're made DCM, Arthur Andersen touches you on the forehead," says an ex-State Department official.

The fastest way to reach the top in the Foreign Service is by writing solid political reports, not by dealing with personnel issues or crunching budget numbers. That means people whose management experience is limited to supervising a small political team can be assigned to run a U.S. Embassy on their next tour. "We often choose career ambassadors as we choose non-career ambassadors, on the assumption that anyone with brains and connections can do the job," says Tony Quainton, former-Director General of the Foreign Service. In 1992, the State department tried to address the lack of management expertise in its upper rungs by changing its promotions procedure. Under the new system, policy analysts would have had to spend time in management and administrative positions to move up the ladder, and vice versa. Many FSOs balked at the recommendations, however, and the proposal was shelved. That could damage the department in the long-run. The role of ambassadors today is not only to represent the United States abroad, but coordinate the work of dozens of domestic agencies in the field. And if the men and women running the show don't know how to manage, it could make for a difficult workplace abroad. —AS

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Neglected Evidence

Why doesn't anyone pay attention to educational research?

By Richard Whitmire

TWO YEARS AGO FIVE MID-LEVEL Kentucky education specialists sat down in their sixth floor Frankfort office and launched a mission that appeared both reasonable and practical: Find an algebra program with real proof that it raises student performance by 7 percent a year over 3 years.

A reasonable mission statement. But they couldn't find a single curricula publisher who had the proof. "Teachers like our curricula," the publishers would answer when asked for proof. "It's teacher friendly." And it wasn't just that the major U.S. textbook publishers couldn't prove their pricey curricula actually worked. They were offended by the question. "The conversations frequently deteriorated," says Kentucky team leader Jo O'Brien. "They would become snippety." If you have a problem, they would tell O'Brien, check with your own bid list people in the State Education Department. They approved us.

Alarmed at what she was hearing, O'Brien checked with the state purchasing officials, those who assemble the approved vendors on the bid list. Well, actually we don't ask for proof these programs work, she was told. We want to know if the textbook glue will hold up for years. We want to know if their table of contents shows all the topics our state regulations insist they show. Finding little success in algebra, the team expanded its investigation and started phoning curricula specialists in other states. Surely, they thought, other states had been down the same path. Nope. What they heard from the curricula specialists were a lot of anecdotes about their favorite programs. "I just love Montessori," a reading specialist would say. But no proof of success was offered.

O'Brien's team finally faced the facts. They had to be pioneers. They had to explore the uncharted universe of finding education programs with proof they work. Keep in mind, this is 15 years after "A Nation At Risk" was published, the exposé of America's educational failures that sent this country on a well-deserved education reform binge. After sifting through 500 programs, they came up with a mere 50. Absent from that list are some of the biggest names in textbook publishing, the giants whose textbooks undoubtedly are passed out in your child's classrooms.

Even today, after their "Results-Based Programs Directory" has been published, O'Brien shivers at the thought of a gigantic education industry never asked to prove that its products work. Instead, it caters to the ever-changing whims of teachers and self-styled education gurus. Let's try the "whole language" approach to reading; let's try organizing middle schools into interdisciplinary teams; let's try tossing out teacher lectures; let's try pulling poor kids out of classes for remedial instruction. Long before any of these methods could be tested to see if they helped students learn, they were scrapped in favor of a newer, shinier model. "We are amazingly lax consumers," says O'Brien. "We've told the industry what matters, and for a long time that was teacher comfort. We don't question the product enough."

Try it, You'll Like It

Paul Hill, an education researcher at the University of Washington, sees parallels between education practices and medicine as practiced in the Colonial period. "There was not a lot of science behind medicine then," says Hill. "It was swept by fads." Each patient's suffering was thought of as unique, a special case. There was no broad research that demanded standardized responses to standard ills. Each patient was in need of individualized care. Ever hear one of your child's teachers use that word? We provide individualized instruction. Each class is unique.

Richard Whitmire *is an education reporter for Gannett News Service.*

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"Physicians used to say the same thing," says Hill. "There was a natural tendency to think of everything as much too unique to want to generalize your practice."

But while medicine has moved into an era of standardized practice driven by medical research, education remains in the era of leeches and bleeding. Where was the research that demanded teachers drop phonics, teach in "open" classrooms or try "new" math? Where, for example, was the research that led so many elementary school teachers to tinker with "heterogeneous grouping," where children of mixed abilities were put into groups with the hope that the faster learners would tow along the slower learners? Like so many educational fads, it *sounded* like a good idea, but it rarely worked in crowded classrooms lacking the talented aides who could pull it off.

At Harvard, former teacher Tom Loveless teaches a subject on this very topic: "Controversies in Education Reform." The syllabus, which consists entirely of required readings on school failures, resembles an indictment of a Mafia chief. Loveless has a personal feel for the problem that dates back to his nine years of teaching in Sacramento public schools. "This is an industry with tremendous turnover at school sites," says Loveless. "Half the principals change schools every six or seven years and superintendents even more frequently. I went through three or four principals, all of them saying: "I have some new ideas and we're going to change things." In come the big changes, out goes the principal within a few years, in come more big changes. "Nobody would stay in one place long enough to be responsible for outcome," says Loveless. "By the time everyone figures out what they're doing doesn't work the principal is gone and you're off to a new approach."

Like Paul Hill, Loveless draws parallels with medicine to point out the need for more educational research. But he also points out that the parallel is a limited one. "You can't give a placebo in education," says Loveless. Conducting randomized trials is even harder. Think about your kids' schools. Let's say on Friday your principal announces a year-long experiment in third grade: We're going to randomly divide the children into two sections, one taught with progressive approaches with the goal of making children independent learners and the other section taught by traditionalists relying on lectures-and-quizzes. What's the first thing you do Monday morning? March into the principal's office and demand your child be switched from one group to the other, of course. So much for random assignment.

The teachers who try new programs tend to be self-selecting too, which raises questions about how valuable trials of these programs can be. Consider, for instance, the acclaimed Success for All reading program developed at Johns Hopkins University by Bob Slavin, which advertises itself as "research-proven." Sure, there's plenty of research behind Success for All, and it's probably a good reading program for children coming into schools from homes where reading was never a priority. But "[T]eachers in the Slavin program usually volunteer," says Loveless. "They automatically tend to be better teachers... If I invent a math program today and I go out tomorrow and ask for volunteers, just by the nature of volunteering you know you're going to get better teachers. They're committed. They know a lot of resources will go into it."

Teachers quickly wise up about new programs arriving at their classroom door with the "proven by research" label, says Loveless. "Four or five times a year I had to attend an in-service on some program I suspected was completely worthless, and the person conducting the instruction would always begin with saying how this approach was backed by research. I taught long enough to see the cycle of contradictions."

This cycle has led to an understandable skepticism about testing new methods. Yet occasionally, education research *does* rise to the level of medical research. Take, for example, the Perry Preschool experiment run between 1962 and 1967 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. A group of 58 graduates of that high quality intervention program have been tracked into their 30s and compared to a control group of 65 randomly selected counterparts. The results are dramatic: The Perry graduates outstrip their counterparts in earning power, family stability and the likelihood of avoiding crime and welfare. The results are so dramatic, in fact, that researchers calculate that every dollar spent on the Perry Preschool graduate returned $7.16 to society in avoided welfare costs and taxes paid by the job-holding graduates.

Perry isn't the only high quality preschool research pointing to big gains. University of North Carolina researcher Craig Ramey has demonstrated in his "Abecedarian" experiment that he could raise IQs of inner city babies and make the gains stick, with his children testing 1.4 grade levels ahead of the control group. Both Ramey and Lawrence Schweinhart of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, which oversees the Perry research, deliver the same message: recruit the best teachers and keep a focus on school readiness skills. "The thrust of our public

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message for the last 10 years is that programs have to be of high quality in order to be successful," says Schweinhart. "There can be no compromise."

And yet the history of federal inner-city education programs is replete with compromises. Head Start, which was established in 1965 to help poor children succeed in school, has suffered ever since from low quality staffing, an aversion to academics, and an emphasis on social welfare gains over learning. Each of these problems violated the lessons of Ramey and Schweinhart; each chipped away at the promise of Head Start. "Head Start was conceived socially rather than academically," says E.D. Hirsch, author of *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them.* Lacking any academic coherence, it should not be surprising that Head Start's gains fade about two years after the program concludes, say Hirsch and other critics. To this day, Head Start retains the academic fuzziness built into its 1965 launch: Fewer than 30 percent of Head Start teachers have bachelors degrees; salaries run about $10,000 less than the salaries of starting teachers, and parents at each center must be involved in developing that center's education approach. "Imagine a hospital where patients were expected to decide which treatments were most appropriate," says former Education Department official Diane Ravitch.

If our primary school programs have ignored the best research, middle schools have fared no better. (American fourth-graders rank close to the top on the Third International Math and Science Study; by eighth grade, they're close to the bottom among developed nations.) The reforms that were supposed to turn around middle schools were pioneered a decade ago by the Carnegie Corporation's "Turning Points" report. But Carnegie officials were frustrated to find that most schools adopted only the "face-lift" part of their recommendations, such as the stuff that addresses adolescent self-esteem problems, and ignored the part about raising academic standards.

Is there hope for change? Perhaps. Suddenly, "research proven" has become the mantra of education reform, with Congress and the Department of Education offering up "whole school" redesigns emerging from university research. You have to know the lingo here: whole-school means making over your school from top to bottom to introduce some academic coherence. Congress even offers $150,000 grants to schools deciding to introduce programs such as Success for All, Core Knowledge, or Accelerated Schools. Sounds good, and it should be good. It's the future of the $7 billion Title I program aimed at poor schools. Instead of pulling Freddie out of a class for "remedial" education, Freddie stays in class to get a healthy dose of Core Knowledge or Success for All.

Lesson One

Perhaps the most surprising part of the new trend toward educational research is that it's pointing educators toward the most obvious and seemingly unquantifiable factor of all: good teachers. Such is the conclusion of a new data-crunching methodology pioneered by William Sanders at the University of Tennessee, known as "value added assessment." The method breaks down learning into little bits of data, allowing researchers to sift out factors such as poverty and the education level of the parents. In short, it tells who or what is really adding value, and it turns out that some schools in wealthy communities in Connecticut might not be adding as much "value" as a ghetto school in Houston.

While the Sanders method is used mostly to judge the performance of schools, the bigger breakthrough popped up when looking at teacher quality. In studying two Tennessee districts, Sanders was able to rank teachers into five categories of effectiveness and then track students through their classrooms. The result: Students of equal ability in second grade had greatly different test scores by fifth grade, depending on teacher quality. The most powerful predictor of how a child will fare academically, it turns out, is not race, not poverty, but the effectiveness of individual teachers. The "value added" technique was used in Dallas schools to rate teacher effectiveness, and the results were the same: a 35-point test gap difference depending on the effectiveness of teachers. "What surprised us the most was the size of the effect," Dallas researcher Richard Mendro told The Education Trust.

This should be good news, right? Finally, school districts know where to put their resources: teacher quality. Fat chance. First, the teacher pipeline out of education colleges is brimming with bottom-of-the-barrel recruits, as Massachusetts just discovered when 59 percent of its prospective teachers failed its basic literacy tests. For too many years universities have treated education departments as cash cows, collecting the tuition of education majors and shifting the money to the more cash-demanding engineering and sciences departments. Second, teacher shortages in rural and inner city schools leave them desperate for a teacher. Any teacher.

Finally, there's a conflict between improving teacher quality and lowering class sizes, an education initiative with unlimited popularity but very limited proof-in-research. Everyone from Republican governors to a

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liberal President wants to throw money at reducing classroom size. Clinton wants to spend $12 billion over seven years to hire 100,000 teachers to reduce class sizes. And the research behind all this enthusiasm? Only a single experiment rises above the bar of scientific respectability, says Harvard's Christopher Jencks. That study is Tennessee's Project STAR, conducted in 1984. Project STAR found smaller class sizes a promising reform, especially for minority students. But the experiment seemed to raise as many questions as it answered, and not all researchers agree Project STAR proved the value of reducing class sizes. "It's a very expensive solution that is unlikely to have much, if any, effect," predicts University of Rochester researcher Eric Hanushek.

With education spending mostly a zero-sum funding game, we're left with a choice: smaller class sizes or higher quality teachers. So far classroom size is winning out over teacher quality. Of course, that draws even more teachers into the profession, and not always the best teachers, as California is discovering. When the *Los Angeles Times* recently looked at the impact of Gov. Pete Wilson's campaign to reduce class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, they found schools were hiring uncredentialed teachers on an "emergency" basis at three times the rate before the class reduction effort started. California now has 31,000 teachers who lack certificates—teachers who are learning on the job. Many of these newcomers soon drop out; in Los Angeles, the attrition rate of unlicensed teachers runs as high as 70 percent, the *Times* reported.

Meanwhile, no one seems to be asking the question Jencks raised: If an entire nation is about to roll the dice on a single reform, why must such an important decision revolve around a 15-year-old study from a single state? In an ideal world we'd have great teachers *and* small classes. But in the meantime, if the research is telling us something many educators have long suspected—that there's more bang for the buck in improving the quality of the teachers we have, instead of just hiring more—maybe it's time we paid some attention.

The Washington Monthly

Journalism Award

SEPTEMBER 1998

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The New York Times

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DAVID WESSEL AND BOB DAVIS
"Markets in Crisis (Series)"
The Wall Street Journal

As the worldwide economic crisis drags on, it is becoming apparent that what worked in the 1995 Mexican bailout is not working for the rest of the world. In this incisive series, three latter-day Keynesians offer novel, albeit speculative and untested, solutions that fly in the face of the current economic orthodoxy.

ROCHELLE SHARPE
"How a Drug Approved by the FDA Turned into a Lethal Failure"
The Wall Street Journal

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Another Side of Henry Hyde

Will he do to Clinton what he did to Peter Galbraith?

BY ROBERT WORTH

TO HEAR THE PRESS TELL IT, Bill Clinton should be getting down on his knees every morning and thanking God he has Henry Hyde as his judge. Ever since impeachment hearings began to loom last winter, journalists have been gathering verbal bouquets for Hyde, the aging Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. They speak in awed tones of his legendary fairness, his "bipartisan credibility," his "white mane" of hair and his towering physical presence. They coo over his boyhood apprenticeship with the works of Thomas Aquinas, and they cite approvingly his admonition that "politics must be checked at the door" of any impeachment discussion. *The Washington Post's* Mary McGrory declared in August that Hyde is "the nearest thing to a patriarch that Congress can provide."

Even those who acknowledge the extremism of his politics—he is, after all, the author of the Hyde Amendment, which restricts federal funds for abortions—have tended to brush it off by citing tributes to Hyde's personal charm from such leftish opponents as Rep. Barney Frank and Kate Michelman of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League. When *Salon* magazine revealed Hyde's five-year adulterous affair and Hyde dismissed it as "youthful indiscretion," few pundits made much of the fact that Hyde was in his forties at the time and that the affair destroyed a marriage. Even after Hyde's committee unceremoniously dumped Clinton's videotaped grand jury testimony onto the public in September, much of the media continued to blame Newt Gingrich.

Some of this media fawning was forgiveable—after all, everybody yearns to anoint a Wise Man in times of crisis, and Hyde certainly looks the part. But his bipartisan demeanor masks some truths that should make us worry about Clinton's chances for a fair hearing. Just consider the way Hyde behaved two years ago as chairman of a House investigation into U.S. policy toward Bosnia during the Balkan war. The charges were the same as in the Clinton mess—perjury and a coverup. In that case they proved groundless. And instead of giving the accused officials a chance to clear their names, Hyde's committee used its power to smear the administration's foreign policy and to seriously damage the reputations of eight public servants who had done no apparent wrong.

A Democratic Iran-Contra?

Hyde's investigation began in 1996, shortly after the *Los Angeles Times* broke what seemed like a momentous story: The U.S. ambassador in Croatia, Peter Galbraith, had given a secret "green light" in 1994 to allow arms shipments from Iran to the Bosnian Muslims. Although the Bosnians had long since gained the world's sympathy in their desperate struggle against the brutal and better-armed Serbs, the idea that the U.S. had allowed anyone to receive arms from a terrorist state like Iran, and in direct violation of the U.N. arms embargo on Bosnia, seemed shocking. Some Republican congressmen suggested that the truth was even worse—that U.S. officials might have actually run a covert operation to procure arms from Iran. To Bob Dole and other Republicans running for office later that year, the prospect of a "Democratic Iran-contra" scandal, with Peter Galbraith (son of the liberal establishment's saint, John Kenneth) as its Ollie North, was almost too good to be true. Dole ordered an investigation by the Senate Intelligence Committee, and the House—after fierce debate and a close vote—appropriated $1 million for its own probe. Henry Hyde, selected by Gingrich to chair the investigation, told reporters that it had been "incredible folly" for the administration to allow Iran, "the most radical nation in the world," to become involved in Bosnia.

These charges, which were disingenuous from the beginning, collapsed under scrutiny. As Hyde and

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Dole knew very well, the Iranian military presence in Bosnia dated back to 1992, during the Bush administration. And although the green light decision increased it, that increase almost certainly saved the Bosnians. It also laid the groundwork for the Dayton Peace Accords, which mandated the removal of all foreign military forces—including the Iranians—from Bosnia. In short, the green light was a skillful piece of diplomacy, not a scandal. Yet Hyde, through a deft manipulation of public ignorance and journalistic credulity, used the incident to do lasting damage to the administration.

To see how, it's necessary to review the bloody and complex history that led up to the green light scenario. In April 1994 the U.S. had just negotiated an end to a brutal year-long war between the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims. The two groups had a common interest, because both were enemies of the Serbs, the principal aggressors in the larger Balkan war. Still, the Muslims might not have agreed to form a federation with the Croats if their access to the sea (and potential arms supplies) had not been through Croatian territory.

So it was no suprise to Peter Galbraith, the U.S. ambassador in Zagreb, when he received a call from a Croatian official asking him whether the U.S. would object to arms shipments across Croatian territory from Iran and other Islamic nations, in violation of the U.N. embargo. "The alliance was very fragile," Galbraith recalls, "and there were some Croats—including [president Franjo] Tudjman's son, and possibly Tudjman himself, who would have been just as happy to have us say no [to the arms transfers]." That, he says, would have led to more war between the Croats and the Bosnians. Such a war would have been disastrous to the Bosnians, because the Croats felt no scruples about smuggling in their own arms. And a weakened Bosnia would have been more vulnerable to the "ethnic cleansing" campaigns of the Serbs.

Why didn't the U.S. lift the arms embargo, or simply break it so as to arm the Bosnians themselves? That, after all, was what both Clinton and the congressional Republicans wanted to do in 1993-4. One reason was that the Europeans opposed it, and the U.S. (particularly the U.S. military) was reluctant to commit itself alone to what looked like the mother of all quagmires. Also, lifting the embargo could easily have inspired an immediate and ferocious attack by the Serbs, who would have used all their firepower to destroy the Bosnians before the rest of the world could step in to help.

Of course, allowing more Iranian weapons into Bosnia was a real risk; no one wanted to see the *mujahedin* add their anti-American fury to Bosnia's already murderous stew. But there had been Iranians in Bosnia almost since the beginning of the conflict. To suggest otherwise, as the Republicans did in the spring of 1996, was disingenuous. As Richard Holbrooke wrote in his 1998 memoir of the Bosnian conflict, *To End a War*, "These [Congressional] investigations were premised on the theory that secret arms shipments to the Bosnians from Iran had begun in 1994, and that the Clinton Administration had somehow acted illegally in not stopping them. It is especially noteworthy, therefore, that the activities in question were already taking place two years earlier, during the Bush administration, with the clear knowledge of the American embassy and U.N. official in Zagreb, and were even mentioned in newspaper stories at the time."

It is true that there is a difference between passively allowing arms transfers to take place and sending a positive signal that one does not object. But "in the middle of a war, you're not picking from good alternatives," recalls Galbraith. "In those years it was almost always the least horrible alternative." In the circumstances, Galbraith made up his mind that turning a blind eye to the Iranian arms transfers was the best course of action. He called Washington to offer his recommendation, and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, deputy NSA Sandy Berger, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, and President Clinton all agreed. Galbraith was told to let Tudjman know that the U.S. had "no instructions" on the arms shipments. In other words, the U.S. would not object.

"It was a judgment call," says Galbraith. "But I haven't regretted it for a single second." Richard Holbrooke, writing in *To End A War*, agreed, calling it "the correct policy decision" and adding that "the 'covert' support given to the Bosnian Muslims by Islamic nations (including Iran) had helped to keep the Sarajevo government alive at a time when its survival hung by a thread. For the United States to have continued to object to such assistance ... would in my opinion have been unconscionable."

The green light, in other words, may well have saved the Bosnians from extinction. By allowing them to arm themselves without breaking the embargo, the U.S. had helped to create a balance of power between the warring parties, which in turn made the Dayton peace accords of 1995 possible. And those accords mandated the removal of all foreign military personnel, including the Iranians. Even Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, who directed the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation of the green light policy,

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concluded that "it's all worked out pretty well."

It is true that the Clinton administration showed poor judgment in failing to inform Congress and the CIA about the green light. Galbraith claims he did inform the local CIA station chief, but Washington left the matter unclear, leaving intelligence confused about U.S. policy for a few months.

However, for Hyde to attack the Clinton administration for not informing him and his colleagues was no small act of hypocrisy. During the Iran-Contra controversy in 1987, Hyde was one of the administration's most vehement defenders, arguing tirelessly that though the secret and illegal means used by the administration in its determination to fund the Nicaraguan contras were "wrong and bad and blameworthy," they were justified by the end: "the Nicaraguan resistance survived." In fact, Hyde made his defense of government secrecy a matter of general principle, arguing in a June 1987 *Washington Post* Op-Ed that it was dangerous to trust "the Hill's loose lips" on matters of national security. "Within Congress at large," Hyde wrote, "there is a widespread and often naive suspicion of both secrecy and covert actions ... In these circumstances, it is small wonder that the administration has become convinced that controversial programs will be leaked."

Nine years later, one might have supposed that the fair-minded Hyde would have applauded the adminstration's success at arming the Bosnian muslims—something he and Bob Dole had argued for in Congress during the Balkan war—and helping to fashion a peace agreement that successfully pushed almost all the Iranian forces out of Bosnia. After all, Hyde himself had voted for legislation directing the United States to cease enforcing the U.N. arms embargo on Bosnia only six months after the green light decision. In effect, Hyde voted to support the green light policy.

But that didn't stop him from declaring the administration's decision an outrage in 1996, and suggesting (in the Majority's report) that Galbraith and Tony Lake were part of an Ollie North-style weapons pipeline. With no real evidence to go on, Hyde's investigators clutched at straws that would make even a devoted conspiracy theorist frown. They exploited a minor difference between Galbraith's recollections about a meeting and those of his secretary to suggest a conspiracy—despite the fact that his secretary made it clear she didn't remember much, and later wrote a letter to the committee that clarified the discrepancy. The investigators also tried to probe Galbraith's personal meetings with an American woman—even though both were single, and she did not work for the government. "I never understood what my personal life had to do with arms to Bosnia," he recalls.

Ambassador Galbraith found these tactics unpleasant, but he also saw them as an indication that Hyde's witch-hunt was running out of steam and would soon be dropped. Instead, Hyde released a report on October 11, 1996, referring the matter to the Justice Department for possible appointment of an independent counsel. The report described Galbraith as a rogue ambassador who had wanted to funnel arms from Iran and had "no aversion to Islamic fundamentalism." The letter of referral that accompanied the subcommittee's report named Galbraith, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Tony Lake, and five others for possible counts of perjury, obstruction of Congress, conspiracy, and making false statements to the government.

The accused officials were in shock; they had been given no hearing, no opportunity to defend themselves. Yet Hyde, as usual, insisted that he was only being fair: "This has not been a partisan exercise," he declared in his fluent baritone at the press conference, "it has been conducted discreetly without a three-ring circus atmosphere."

The Democrats on the committee could not have disagreed more. Their report described the allegations as "reckless," "shameful" and "absurd." Most revealing, however, was their response to Hyde's charges that the administration had hidden its crimes from the public. "The Majority asserts that the Administration has manipulated classification rules to hide damaging material ... [But] it is the Majority that has rushed to release its conclusions even before submitting the report to the Executive Branch for declassification. This tactic has allowed the Majority to make its most inflammatory charges in general and conclusiory terms, while using the classified nature of the underlying material to shield its allegations from close scrutiny."

But Hyde was not done yet. In late December Galbraith and the other accused officials received another rude surprise when the *Los Angeles Times* published a front-page story implying that Galbraith had indeed taken part in an "illegal covert action" in Bosnia. The article cited "hundreds of pages of classified documents obtained recently by The Times". It failed to acknowledge that those documents were leaks of selected classified portions of the Republican report. There was no indication that there had been a Democratic rebuttal to the charges raised in those classified documents. The FBI later investigated the leak, which included "very sensitive intelligence material whose compromise could have caused harm to American servicemen in Bosnia,"

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according to a Clinton administration offical. Although Hyde himself may not have been involved, the documents were almost certainly leaked by members of the subcommittee for which he was responsible.

When I asked a *Los Angeles Times* writer about this episode, he said: "I can remember laughing" about the paper's credulous acceptance of Hyde's version of the story. "I guess it was an example of journalistic naivete," he added, "Oops..."

Galbraith and the other accused officials are not laughing. Although the Justice Department found no indication of any wrongdoing, the controversy has had a "devastating" effect on some of their careers, one of them said. The lingering impression of a scandal certainly helped to kill Anthony Lake's nomination as CIA director in early 1997. Although such damage is hard to quantify, the other officials' names remain linked to the controversy. And they know who to blame. "Henry Hyde is portrayed as being above politics," said one of them. "That was not my experience."

Will Henry Hyde try to do to Bill Clinton what he did to Peter Galbraith? Who knows—perhaps he will live up to his reputation for fairness this time. But the Democrats, and the press, should watch him carefully. He could be the Republicans' ultimate weapon: an iron fist wrapped in a very civil velvet glove.

Mirror, Mirror

One of the great hidden ironies of the Clinton scandal is that Henry Hyde, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, might have found his own name in the supporting documents if Ken Starr had decided to include Whitewater in his report to Congress. At the center of the Whitewater affair, which Starr probed fruitlessly for years, was an Arkansas savings and loan called Madison Guaranty, run by Clinton friend and campaign contributor Jim McDougal. Madison went belly-up in 1989, costing taxpayers roughly $69 million in federally insured funds. One of its disastrous loans, to a luxury beachfront condominium in Texas called the "Aransas Princess," was shared with another S&L called Clyde Federal, based in North Riverside, Illinois. And one of the directors of Clyde Federal at the time was Henry J. Hyde. Like Madison, Clyde later failed, costing taxpayers $67 million. If Clinton was guilty of a conflict of interest in doing business with a shady S&L operator for whom his wife did legal work, Hyde was similarly guilty when he agreed to oversee the system (in his role as House Judiciary Chairman) that was responsible for judging and prosecuting him for his involvement in Clyde's failure.

Hyde claims he was a passive board member and only joined as a favor to a friend. The boardroom minutes, however, show Hyde as an active participant in some of Clyde's worst loan decisions. He also claims that Clyde was solvent during his tenure. Again, the record shows that auditors reported serious management lapses during his tenure, and federal regulators warned that Clyde was on its way to insolvency. After Clyde collapsed in 1991, Hyde gained the dubious distinction of being the only sitting congressman to have been sued by the government in connection with the S&L scandal. But Hyde's negligence extended well beyond Clyde Federal. His involvement may have helped to keep federal regulators away from Illinois, which had the second highest S&L failure rate in the nation but suffered few prosecutions. He had close ties to at least one other failed thrift, Olympic Savings of Berwyn, Illinois, which was run by his friend, the late Rep. Edward Madigan. Hyde's son, Henry Jr., was a manager in one of Olympic's branches. In 1989, when President Bush moved to eliminate some of the accounting abuses that had made the S&L disaster possible, Hyde led the unsuccessful opposition. If he had won, the abuses at Clyde and other thrifts would have remained hidden, and would ultimately have cost the country millions, perhaps billions, more.

In one important respect, however, Hyde's legal troubles are totally different from Clinton's: He got off scot free. In 1993 the federal Resolution Trust Corporation sued Hyde and his fellow Clyde directors for $17.2 million, charging them with gross negligence, mismanagement, breach of fiduciary duties and breach of contract. Hyde insisted that he would soon be dropped from the suit, but he was not. He hired a succession of high-profile lawyers, who agreed to represent him virtually without payment. Finally, as the case was headed for trial in 1996, the defendants negotiated an $850,000 settlement with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. But Hyde refused to pay a penny of it. The FDIC didn't care who paid, as long as it got its money; and Hyde's fellow directors, most of whom have less money than he does, had no choice but to divide up Henry's portion. So much for Mr. Hyde's legendary fairness. —RW

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Who's Who

By Susan Threadgill

Since **Bruce Lindsey** had back surgery, **Doug Sosnik** has become the aide closest to **Bill Clinton**. The President is said to admire his savvy political counsel—and his skill at hearts.

What Supreme Court justices do clerks like to work for? *The Washingtonian's* **Kim Eisler** reports that the favorites are **Antonin Scalia** (he engages his clerks in constant legal argument—"Every battle is is fought out like an Italian street fight...It is a wonderful experience") and **Stephen Breyer** ("full of questions and constantly considering different possibilities" and "constant give and take" and "he can get to the target issue in a case like a cruise missile") and **Anthony Kennedy** ("most likely to be swayed...by a persuasive clerk"). The least favorite are **William Rehnquist** ("has written and spoken of the dangers of giving clerks power and influence and he practices that viewpoint") and **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** ("something of a nightmare"), who works her clerks harder than **Sandra Day O'Connor,** whose clerks are said to lead a "hellish life."

Why did **Monica Lewinsky**, when she learned from secret service guards at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance of the White House that **Eleanor Mondale**, the thirty-something daughter of former Vice-President **Walter Mondale** was in the White House, immediately assume that she was in there to visit **Bill Clinton**? And what did Lewinsky know about Mondale and the president that made her so upset at the news that she created a mini-riot? Just asking.

Bill Clinton must wish he could be Chancellor of Germany instead of at the White House. **Erik Kirschbaum** of Reuters explains why: "**[Gerhard] Schroeder** abandoned his third wife just over a year ago in the midst of a steamy affair with a journalist young enough to be his daughter. Astonishingly, the affair took flight in front of a group of journalists on a press junket." The German people, aware of all this, proceeded to elected Schroeder as their Chancellor in September. One said, "It's his private business. Stuff like that would only be a problem in America with all its hypocrisy."

Gregory Craig, who is described by *The New York Times* as the new "quarterback" of the White House's efforts to avert impeachment, is not exactly a novice at helping clients get out of hot water. He advised **Ted Kennedy**, when Kennedy's nephew was charged with rape after a night of partying with the senator. And he helped win a verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity for **John W. Hinckley, Jr.** after Hinckley shot **Ronald Reagan.**

One of the more esoteric side-issues in Monicagate is the allegation that **Michael Isikoff** of *Newsweek* heard a tape of **Linda Tripp-Monica Lewinsky** conversations in Ken Starr's office on January 15. But we have to confess that we are less interested in the truth of that charge than in its source, Isikoff's limousine driver. What is a reporter doing being driven around town in a *limousine*? Here at the *Monthly* it's subway, bus, or shoe leather. Mention of a cab is sure to bring an agonized look to the boss's face.

Bet you didn't know that the Methodist Church is a terrorist organization. Neither did we—that is until we were enlightened by West Virginian Gov. **Cecil Underwood** who blames the Methodists for a bomb threat at the state capitol.

Rupert Murdoch's employees are learning it's not smart to launch projects that do not take account of the boss's peccadillos. Remember how he killed **Chris Patten's** book about Hong Kong and fired its editor? Now he has canceled Fox Television's plans to make a TV movie from a book by **Jill Abramson** and **Jane Mayer** that sympathetically portrayed **Anita Hill**. Murdoch, according to **Geraldine Fabrikant** of the *New York Times*, "told an associate that **Justice [Clarence] Thomas** was a friend of his." A waggish friend of ours had this comment: "The only part of his story I find difficult to

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believe is that there is anyone at Fox liberal enough to be sympathetic to Anita Hill."

One other Monicagate sideshow suggests that **Hillary Clinton** wasn't being a fruitcake when she suspected a conspiracy. **Jill Ambramson**—yes, she's the same one who co-authored the Anita Hill book—and **Don Van Natta, Jr.** of *The New York Times* report that three lawyers, all members of the conservative Federalist Society, one a partner in **Ken Starr**'s law firm, "worked together in secret deliberations with [**Linda Tripp**'s] confidante, **Lucianne Goldberg**, to bring Mrs. Tripp's tapes and story to Mr. Starr." Goldberg tells the *Times* that one of the lawyers was used as "a cutout" to keep the role of Starr's partner obscured.

An anonymous source described by **Todd Purdum** of *The New York Times* as a longtime friend and adviser to **Bill Clinton** recently gave Purdum this appraisal of the President: "He likes people to be his audience. He loves to tell stories, to have long discourses. But that's different from a relationship that's based on mutuality, in which there's a kind of genuine exchange. He loves to charm, to conquer, to get people to admire and love him. But that's different set of human interactions than friendship. It's a one-way charm street." We quote at length because we have heard similar comments, somewhat more gently expressed, by others who were also trying to explain why the President has so few close friends.

William Schneider, the political pulse taker for CNN and the *National Journal*, says Democratic leaders are worried about "the Ferraro effect." New York pollsters noticed that the less likely people were to vote, the more likely they were to vote for **Geraldine Ferraro**. Ferraro lost. Other Democratic candidates, Schneider says, fear the same thing will happen to them. The anti-Clinton people are "intense," he explains, while the pro-Clinton people "don't seem to share that same intensity."

Peter Cloeren, Jr. recently pleaded guilty to paying his employees to funnel $37,000 to a Texas Republican congressional candidate. He has also told the Federal Election Commission and *The Hill*'s **Jock Friedly** who led him astray. The guilty parties, Cloeren alleges, include none other than **Tom DeLay**, the House Majority Whip. A DeLay aide called Cloeren "a liar, a cheat, and a fraud" before insisting that he not be quoted and threatening never to speak to *The Hill* again.

Another goodie for all you conspiratorialists out there! In order to persuade **Janet Reno** to give him authority to prosecute a case of consensual sex, **Ken Starr** needed evidence that the president had offered **Monica Lewinsky** a quid pro quo to keep quiet. So what advice did **Linda Tripp** give Monica? "If you sign the affidavit before you get the job, they're never going to give you the job." In other words, make sure to have a quid pro quo to give Starr. The catch is, and it's one of those irritating little inconveniences for the Starr team, Clinton had already begun to help Lewinsky get a job well before she knew she was going to have to provide an affadavit in the **Paula Jones** case.

When **David Schippers**, Majority counsel in the House Judiciary Committee's impeachment investigation, was a Justice Department gangbuster in Chicago, he launched an attack on organized crime. According to Lizette Alvarez of *The New York Times*, his neighbors, mindful of what could happen to prosecutors who offended the Mob, presented him with a set of oversized numbers for the front of his house.

"You don't want anybody to make a mistake, am I right?" Mr. Schippers asked his neighbors.

"Exactly," came the reply.

His former pals at the White House are P. O.'d at **Mickey Kantor** for leaking more for his own benefit, they allege, than to help the President.

Topic A for those who don't believe in impeachment is what is an appropriate punishment for **Bill Clinton**. Our favorite: to have **Linda Tripp** as his intern.

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Memo of the Month

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

June 1998

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During the discussions we had with customers who called to report the delay, we learned that they were very disappointed that certain products were already sold out by the time they received their issue. The situation was further compounded by the fact that we received a tremendous number of orders for products prior to the first day of sale (pre-orders). We also learned that many customers tried to place orders specifically for Item no. 558901, the Sylvester & Tweety Souvenir Sheet of 10 (special die-cut) and were informed that it was no longer on sale. Since we accommodated customer requests to place orders in advance of the sale date, the significant number of pre-orders for this particular philatelic product resulted in a very early sell out.

We are committed to meeting our customers' demand for philatelic products that are not limited editions. **Because of widespread concern about this particular issue, we have taken action to provide you the opportunity to purchase the Sylvester & Tweety Souvenir Sheet of 10, Item no. 558901.** The printer is in the process of die-cutting an overrun of the Sylvester & Tweety Souvenir Sheet and will be shipping them incrementally to Stamp Fulfillment Services (SFS) in Kansas City. You may now place an order as you normally would, via telephone or mail order. We want to ensure that every customer has the opportunity to purchase this item and that, as a valued *USA Philatelic* customer, you are not disappointed. Therefore, we are limiting the purchase quantity for Item no. 558901 to five (5) per order.

Further, as a result of listening carefully to your concerns and suggestions, we are taking another step to preclude such situations in the future by establishing a new policy regarding pre-orders. Pre-orders (orders prior to the first day of sale) will be confined to stamps and stamp panes. Unless specifically noted in *USA Philatelic*, philatelic products will not be available for order before the first day of sale. In addition, if limitations are placed on the number of products which may be ordered, that information will also be published in advance of sale.

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Reinventing Retirement

Fixing Social Security is just the beginning

BY ERIC B. SCHNURER

SOCIAL SECURITY IS NOT GOING "BANKRUPT," as a recent poll found three-quarters of Americans believe, but it is getting—well, a little frail. The root of the problem is that our current system is "pay as you-go": the money from today's payroll taxes goes straight back out the door to pay current retirees, whose contributions to the system vanished instantly to pay the benefits of the retirees who preceded them.

For the time being, more money flows into than out of the system. But as the population ages—particularly the 76-million strong Baby Boom cohort—and as life expectancy expands, the number of Social Security recipients grows inexorably relative to the number of workers paying into the system. In about 20 years the outflow will exceed the inflow, and little more than a decade later, if no changes are made, revenues will fund only 75 percent of the benefits due.

That means someone will have to pay more or get less: Either we raise payroll taxes by almost $500 a year for each worker, or cut benefits by even more. Perhaps this Gordian knot can be cut, though, if we recognize that Social Security poses two distinct questions: how best to care for those who are now, or soon-to-be, retired, and how best to structure retirement security for those who will retire as much as a half-century from now and will live with the system we design until the end of the next century. The competing one-size-fits-all solutions currently being advanced—the New Dealers (keep Social Security forever more or less as it is now, with minor tinkering to shore up the insolvency problem) versus the New Wavers (scrap this industrial-era, welfare state dinosaur and replace it as soon and completely as possible with private savings and stock market investments)—do not address the reality that different people and different generations need different answers.

We're not going to tell an 80-year-old widow dependent on Social Security that the social contract has changed and she's going to have to get a job. In fact, we're not even going to tell someone a year or so from retirement that his plans are out the window because the expected income he's based it on is being precipitously reduced. In short, any changes made in Social Security are primarily, if not entirely, going to affect younger Americans, those in their 20s and 30s. And they'll want and need a very different retirement system from what exists today—both public and private. After all, more than half the workforce, and more than 60 percent of those earning less than $30,000 a year, has no pension coverage. Employer-provided plans have steadily declined over the past two decades. Women, because their average income tends to be lower and because they are twice as likely as men to have part-time jobs, are more likely to have no pension.

These people deserve to benefit from the same retirement security which Congress has made increasingly available to the wealthy and upper middle class. What is needed, then, is a strengthened system of private retirement savings—but not the one that the Wall Street opportunists and latter-day economic Darwinists envision. Rather, it should mean a more universally available, nationwide, portable pension system—a private savings and investment mechanism that is accessible and familiar to low-and-middle income families. And it should continue to include a baseline guarantee of security—the kind that the government, not the market, will provide.

Mending the Net

First things first. Restoring Social Security's solvency—its ability to pay all promised benefits over the 75-year planning horizon used by Social Security Administration actuaries—is actually quite easy, at least in theory. Numerous proposals, most of them amount-

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ing to marginal change, abound. For instance, the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement and Tax Reform—one of many federal commissions appointed in recent years to study and re-study the issue—considered 13 separate specific reforms, as well as two "comprehensive" congressional packages (one advanced by former Rep. Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, the other by former Rep. Jake Pickle of Texas) containing a half-dozen small items each.

But ideally, we would also make the Social Security system fairer. Although the current benefit formula does contain a bit of means-testing, this hardly compensates for the larger inequity of the payroll tax that is central to Social Security. The payroll tax is inherently regressive: It is imposed only on earned income—and not on such income sources as capital gains, dividends, and interest, which accrue overwhelmingly to the wealthy—and at a flat rate. But, on top of all that, there's a cap on the income level to which it applies—meaning that if you make more, there's no tax on the extra. A top executive making $300,000 pays the same amount as a middle manager in the high $60,000s; everyone making more than the current cap of $68,400 pays a lower percentage in tax than everyone making less. It's means-testing, all right—in reverse.

That's why the single biggest thing we could do to make the overall Social Security structure more fair and solvent is to eliminate the cap on earned income subject to the payroll tax. That would mean that the $300,000 executive would at least pay the same tax rate as the day laborer earning $20,000. This change alone would solve about half of the total insolvency problem. And it would be paid for entirely by those most able to bear the burden—people still in their productive years and making more than $68,400. Of course, that is precisely its biggest problem in practical terms: Those best able to pay are also best able to flex the political muscle (and make the campaign contributions) necessary to keep from bearing this burden.

The next biggest step would be to raise Social Security's "Normal Retirement Age" (NRA) early in the next century. Despite the way it sounds, this would affect younger, not older, Americans: Clearly, the retirement age can't be suddenly raised just as someone is about to reach it. But changing demographics suggest something must be done: When Social Security was started, life expectancy was age 62; now it is age 76. With medical advances and healthier lifestyles, life expectancy will continue to grow, in turn lengthening the receipt of Social Security benefits. Thus, in 1983, when Congress last tried to save Social Security, an increase in the NRA was adopted over a long phase-in period: The age will rise from its current 65, to 66 for people now in their early fifties over a period of six years ending in 2008; twelve years later, in 2020, it will then begin to creep upwards again in two-month intervals until it hits age 67 for people now in their late thirties. If we wipe out this 12-year hold so that the age rises to 67 that much sooner, let it continue to rise to an even more realistic 70, and then index it further for actual growth in average life spans, we would obtain almost 40 percent of the savings needed to make Social Security solvent long-term—but it would be paid almost entirely by those now below the age of 40. No one over age 57 today would be affected at all. That still leaves us a little shy of the total savings needed to restore long-term solvency, but that can be made up by simply requiring new state and local government employees to join Social Security like everyone else.

With those three steps, Social Security could be made more fair, more inclusive, more reflective of current realities—and solvent for the foreseeable future. And all without changing the basic premises and structure of the system.

Future Shock

These answers for keeping Social Security paying its full retirement benefits demonstrate that the solution of the system's infirmities isn't likely to be an "elderly issue" at all. We're talking about what Social Security will look like four decades from now, in the 2030s—a century after its inception. The nature of work, retirement, and the social safety net are all changing radically, and will be even more different in 2032; Social Security, the program designed to address these specific issues, must necessarily change, as well.

One way to approach Social Security's long-term future is to ask, What would an "ideal" retirement system look like? Stanford Ross, Social Security Commissioner under President Carter, argues that any intelligent system rests on an assortment of pillars—public and private, individual and employer-based, defined-contribution and defined-benefit. The old principle of strength in diversity counsels us not to rely on just one.

An "ideal" retirement system would therefore embrace several components. First, everyone would save and provide for her own retirement. This could be achieved through individual savings. Or, as started to happen this century, employees who "invest" many years of their life in a firm might, like other investors, receive some kind of financial stake—whether equity

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in the firm or an employer-based pension—that would continue to pay dividends even after they were no longer contributing new inputs. Society could encourage and augment such efforts through the tax system. Finally, since we don't live in an ideal world, either an intra-generational "insurance pool" or a trans-generational welfare program would support at minimally decent levels those who find themselves with insufficient means in their old age.

This is, in fact, more or less the system we have now. Social Security—formally known as "Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance" (OASDI)—achieves the purposes of saving (the government does it for you), regulating the safety of your retirement investments (the government, again, invests the money in ultrasafe Treasury bonds), and providing minimum benefits, very mild income redistribution, and insurance payoffs if death or disability renders family self-support difficult.

These different aspects of Social Security need to be approached differently. Retirement saving might very well be done better through the market than the government, but income redistribution, by definition, cannot be. Fundamental philosophical questions about the nature of retirement and the role of government in the mid-21st century, therefore, should properly precede the current facile political debate about Social Security "privatization." If they did, America would likely come out with a long-term plan providing not one answer, but a mixture of approaches. And it also turns out that that's what we'd likely get if we asked young Americans—the ones who will actually have to live with the retirement system we design for 2032 and beyond—to design it themselves. That's what Linda Rhodes did when President Clinton nominated her to serve as Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, and as her accompanying article notes, she found that today's young Americans have a distinctive generational viewpoint that renders most of their elders' polarized ideological debates, especially on this issue, irrelevant. And, as a serious analysis of the policy questions involved reveals, they're right.

Of its various component functions, Social Security's "pension plan" aspect is by far the largest: The "Survivors & Disability Insurance" function, protecting the widowed, orphaned, or disabled, consumes only about 3 percent of the nation's payroll. The remaining 9.4 percent of the payroll tax goes to "Old Age" payments—a government-run, underfunded, defined-benefit pension savings plan. (Out of that, about one percent goes to provide the guaranteed minimum benefit to those who, under a strict contribution-based system, would receive even less).

It is also Social Security's pension role that raises the most questions: Why not transform the program from a defined-benefit plan into a defined-contribution plan, and let the pensioner bear the risk of whether his investments produce enough to live on down the road? Why not at least give the pensioner the benefits and risks of investing her nest-egg in something more exciting than low-risk, low-yield US Treasury bills? Why not convert the current pay-as-you-go system—a pyramid scheme that would never be permitted in the private sector—into one where each worker's investment actually finances his own retirement? In fact, why is the government doing all this for us instead of simply mandating that we save and (perhaps) regulating our investments' safety? For that matter, why have government do anything at all? Just let people have their 12.4 percent back in cash!

If you just let people manage their finances as they choose, you'll eventually wind up with some starving seniors, and are you really going to let them eat dog food?

"Privatization" has therefore become an increasingly central topic in the Social Security debate. The prospect gained momentum from the amazing stock market surge, the attendant increase in the number of Americans investing in the market, and the large number of financiers salivating at the thought of what it could mean for them if billions of dollars now held in T-bills were suddenly turned into brokerage accounts. Early in 1997, members of a national advisory commission on Social Security issued dueling reports on how to stabilize Social Security; while they could not reach consensus, each proposal contained some type of privatization component.

It's important to understand, however, that, in this context, privatization doesn't mean precisely what it does in most policy disputes: ending entirely the government's involvement in favor of purely private activity. No one is suggesting—yet—simply abolishing Social Security and letting the private sector provide for

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old people's retirements as it sees fit. Even in this age of market-worship and general public hatred of government, few Americans are ready to treat the real world as simply a more exciting version of the old Milton Bradley "Game of Life," letting old folks end up in some pathetic "Poor Farm" if they made the wrong choices or got a few bad spins along the way. This may be what many ideologues pushing privatization eventually envision, but for the time being, what's meant by privatizing the program comes in three basic flavors:

"Vanilla": Social Security invests some of its funds for you in private securities instead of government bonds. This option, preferred by adherents of Social Security in its more-or-less traditional form, isn't really privatization in any meaningful sense—in fact, it is designed to head off privatization. It would simply allow Social Security to take advantage of the higher yields—and higher risks—of investing in stocks and bonds instead of just T-bills.

At the opposite end of the taste spectrum is: "Chocolate," which would allow you to invest all or part of your Social Security contribution however you see fit, by giving you the money back in a Private Retirement Account. Chocolate's supporters include not only right-wingers who want to dismantle social insurance systems and stock-brokers who want to profit from investing all those funds, but also people who want higher returns on the nation's trillion-dollar collective nest-egg but find scary the "vanilla" prospect of the government owning voting stock in private companies amounting to one-sixth of the entire US economy.

Chocolate itself, however, is viewed as a distinctly dark alternative by those who worry about tens of millions of Americans who have never seen a proxy statement being asked to make sophisticated investment decisions—which leaves us with the option Washington is likely to embrace, which, as usual, is: "Fudge"—something that masquerades as chocolate, but with a vanilla twist. Under this plan, an individual could choose from a government-provided list, kind of like the United Way campaign, as to how a small share of her Social Security "account" is invested. The rest would continue to be handled by the government as it is now. While this is now the most likely proposal from the Clinton Administration, debate rages over the exact contours of such a fundamental change and what fraction of the current payroll tax citizens would be allowed to earmark.

This line of thinking, of course, begs the question whether the government in a free society should mandate that citizens save at all. But the people you would normally expect to fixate on this question—the laissez-faire types of the right—seem all too happy to support a government mandate here because, after all, we're talking billions in potential commissions. And isn't that what laissez-faire policies are all about?

Whatever the philosophical issues, the reality is that some sort of mandated savings program is simply less problematic than all the alternatives: If you just let people manage their finances as they choose, you'll eventually wind up with some starving seniors, and are you really going to let them eat dog food? If not, that means allowing people onto the gravy train in the end without imposing any commensurate responsibility on them to try to look after their retirements themselves. The government mandating that all Americans save for their future and then regulating what they may invest in to ensure that no one squanders their basic nest-egg is therefore the route that winds up making the most sense; the right-wing ideologues who want to privatize everything and the old-time lefties who want no changes are thus both out of step with reality.

Private Problems

Getting over the ideological objections to privatization turns out to be the easy part. The hard part is getting past the technical difficulties. The thing that people who promote privatization as a panacea overlook is that there are costs involved. And when you take those into account, the change-over isn't quite so painless or profitable.

First of all, we're not writing on a clean slate: Millions of older Americans are expecting Social Security checks to show up in their mailboxes next month, and that money's not coming from what they paid into the system years ago—we've already spent that. This is the fly in the ointment for those who want to privatize the whole system right away: It's one thing to tell a 24-year-old to start saving some of her income for her retirement; it's another to tell that to someone who's already retired. Benefits for current retirees will simply have to continue being paid—and that means current workers can't just be allowed to take all their payroll taxes and invest them for themselves: For the time being, 94 cents of every dollar of payroll taxes will be needed to pay current beneficiaries.

If everyone's going to start funding their own retirements, then the entire system must first undergo a massive change-over to a fully-funded system, from the current "pay-as-you-go" funding scheme. This raises the "someone pays twice" problem: Not only must the money be made available to pay current and looming retirees, but the current working generation's

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"pensions" must be funded now. Dealing with this change-over problem will cost the equivalent of an additional one percent of payroll, or $30 billion per year.

Privatization proponents insist that putting taxpayer funds into private investment vehicles will yield far higher payoffs, meaning we can get by in the future with lower contribution levels. Ultimately this is true—assuming, of course, that the current refusal of the stock market to keep rising is an aberration—but this only compensates for some of the transition costs. Restoring solvency, and converting from a pay-as-you-go system and the continuing, though declining, need to keep paying current retirees' benefits under the old system mean that such a change—even if phased in over the next 30 years—would wind up saving less than one-half of one percent off current payroll tax rates (a 100 percent, immediate conversion would actually require a tax increase).

Even then, we'd have to ignore Social Security's two other components: social insurance and a guaranteed minimum income for the elderly. But unless we're just going to throw dependent widows and the disabled out into the cold, the "insurance" portion of Social Security—for survivors and the disabled —will have to remain in effect, and that requires, you'll recall, a payroll tax of three percent. Ensuring a minimum level of retirement for all beneficiaries requires another one percent of payroll: That need won't disappear simply by letting intermittent, minimum-wage workers play the stock market with their excess spending money. If we maintain these commitments, the total cost of a solvent, privatized Social Security system would be slightly less than 15 percent of payroll through the first third of the next century, compared to the 12.4 percent rate of today. And a private system would also abandon the current system's mild redistributive effect by which lower income workers get back proportionately more on what they pay into the system.

In sum, even in a privatized world, we'd still have to raise taxes substantially or cut someone's benefits (and it would probably be the poor). There's no such thing as a free lunch, even—if not especially—in the private sector.

Port-a-Plan

This doesn't mean that privatization isn't part of the solution. It is: To deny that is to insist that either the trillion dollars of retirement income we now set aside in Social Security should, at a time of looming insolvency, earn the lowest return possible or that, while the money should indeed be put to work producing higher returns, Alexis Herman and Donna Shalala should then control one-sixth of all equity in Corporate America. Attempts to "fudge" the issue by providing for private investment of only one or two percent of current Social Security taxes might make sense as a way to test the waters, but are rather unconvincing as ultimate solutions. If personal retirement accounts do make more sense than government-managed investment in T-Bills, then it makes sense for more than a mere two percent. If they don't, then why bother with them at all?

In fact, it makes perfect sense to let Americans handle their own retirement savings instead of doing it through the current Social Security system. We still rely primarily on private retirement planning in this country—we just don't think of it as part of the same "system" as Social Security. Perhaps it's time we did.

President Clinton and Congress have in fact taken some steps in the past two years to promote private retirement savings, making it easier for small businesses to set up pension plans. What is really needed, however—and we are slowly creeping in this direction—is a coherent approach to retirement savings that makes them universally available and portable: no more complicated vesting and roll-over rules, no more loss of savings just because one changes jobs, just a simple, tax-assisted system that encourages workers to sock money away for tomorrow and employers to provide some compensation in deferred form, as well.

Additionally, a government-sponsored, privately-managed pension pool—already proposed in pending legislation—could create a universal and portable system allowing businesses or their employees to "buy in," as has been proposed with government employee health benefit plans. (See "A Health Care Plan Most of Us Could Buy," April 1998.) There's no real reason to differentiate new private savings devices—except to continue the increasingly disparate treatment afforded higher-income savers. Just let savings, up to some reasonable, middle-class level, accrue tax-free until retirement, whether the payor into the Retirement Account is the worker, her employer, or Social Security.

But ultimately, individual responsibility for retirement saving isn't a complete answer. Not everyone will be able to care adequately for his own future—and not just because of poor judgment: The lower one's income, the more saving is a luxury. That's why we got Social Security to begin with. If we want to continue to ensure that the unlucky or unwise can still live at a minimum standard of decency in old age, we'll have to pay for it through a Social Security program perhaps reduced somewhat in importance relative to beefed-up private

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pensions and savings, but nonetheless restored to solvency.

Would younger Americans be willing to bear the bulk of this burden, especially if it's for the purpose of preserving transfers to the needy? Let's face it: They have no choice. If we're utterly irresponsible and do nothing to change Social Security, they'll eventually wind up bearing the entire burden, anyway. But as Linda Rhodes writes below, today's younger Americans are perfectly willing, where their parents

Listening to Generation X

~Linda Colvin Rhodes

Tony Ross is in his mid-twenties. He feels like he's one of the lucky ones his age because he, unlike many of his friends, actually has a job in an area that he studied—and he has health benefits (one in three Americans between the ages of 20 and 34 don't). He's delaying marriage, stayed with his parents after college to save on rent and isn't so sure his younger cousins will be able to go to college like he did because student loans are too hard to come by now—that's why the poorest 25 percent of families are actually enrolling their kids in colleges at lower rates than they did fifteen years ago. His view of the future is somewhat hopeful, but he strongly believes that things will not be as good for him as they were for his parents.

"I'm not being cynical, it's just the way it is," he says. In fact, Tony and his counterparts are already making 32 percent less in real median weekly earnings than were young men back in 1973. Nevertheless, when it comes to Social Security, he thinks the regular deductions from his paycheck are a good idea: "My grandmother couldn't get by without it, so I really don't mind paying for her. But I'm not going to count on it for me." So, although still in his twenties, he's already investing in a pension plan, the first in his family to do so.

Tony doesn't sound like the typical young American today—termed "Generation X," to their annoyance—often portrayed as ungrateful, cynical, bored and unengaged. But rather than Tony being atypical for his generation, it's the stereotyped Generation Xer that's atypical.

It is "Generation X" who will be most affected by Social Security's insolvency in 2032, when they're beginning to retire. Quite simply, their Baby Boomer parents will have spent one-quarter of their children's Social Security checks. Some legacy to leave behind.

So now we find ourselves in a great public debate and discussion to remedy this broken intergenerational compact. And though the President is to be commended for holding town meetings across the country to engage the public, the generation so obviously missing from the table—a table set by the mistakes of the generations now hosting the soiree—is the generation with the most at stake.

I set out to understand what's important to Generation X—Americans born between 1960 and 1982, who at 79.4 million outnumber even the Baby Boomers—on behalf of the Social Security Administration after the President nominated me in 1995 to become the agency's new Deputy Commissioner. After a year of talking with Xers and pouring over the latest research on their generation, I left the experience not only with a better understanding of them but with a sobering and apologetic view of my own Boomer generation.

Of course, there is no true, all-encompassing description of any generation. But generational personalities do emerge, due in large part to cultural experiences their members all shared when they came of age. My generation grew up with Ozzie and Harriet, the Mickey Mouse Club, the Camelot of the Kennedy years, and unprecedented economic boom times. We entered our late teens with a sense of optimism and conviction that we could go off and change the world—we could even conquer space or end a war.

Ask Xers what national events they remember from when they were coming of age and they will recall America held hostage, long gas lines and a space shuttle exploding with a teacher on board as they watched live in their classrooms. They've grown up with the threat of AIDS, the Wall Street Crash of 1987, and terrorists on American soil. As "latchkey" children, they've been fending for themselves since the ripe old age of six while Harriet worked; they saw Ozzie mostly on weekends—maybe: Forty percent of Gen Xers are children of divorce. The message? Life is insecure. Times can be tough. Institutions—marriage, government, religion—are unreliable. You can only count on yourself. Is it any wonder that a poll found more Gen Xers believing in UFOs than in Social Security? They're not cynical, they're just realistic.

What would such a generational outlook contribute to the Social Security discussion? Plenty. Take, for instance, the debate over privatization. Rather than being "slackers," as so often described in popular media, GenXers are great at digesting deluges of information and at multi-tasking (listening to a Walkman, surfing the Internet, and answering the phone at the same time). Perhaps as a result, they are in fact more financially savvy at their age than any Americans before them: These

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apparently are not, to ensure that other generations, as well as the less fortunate members of their own, are ensured a decent retirement. It's just that, along with this responsibility for others, they want to be given responsibility for themselves. Unlike their elders who have made such a mess of Washington, younger Americans seem to be interested in both the "security" and the "social" aspects of Social Security. Let's hope someone in the capital starts listening to them soon.

young people are investing more in their twenties than their parents or grandparents did. Taco Bell recruits young workers today by offering them stock options and 401(k) plans. How many Boomers were thinking about stock options when they went looking for their jobs at age sixteen? They are pragmatic and entrepreneurial: Rather than simply accepting that their economic prospects are being downsized for them by our generation, they have ventured off into the world of small business and today dominate the software world.

Generation X appears, on the whole, well suited to handle the demands of self-directed investing of a portion of Social Security. They are, as a group, far more committed to saving for themselves, far more financially sophisticated, far more self-reliant, and far more capable of handling the information tasks of personal financial management in the future than were past generations.

For those who might interpret Gen X's financial savvy as a green light for an everyone-for-himself privatization of Social Security, however, think again. Having grown up in the most diverse population in American history, Generation X is much more racially and socially tolerant than its elders, and having been brought up largely in divorced and/or latch-key homes, they yearn for a sense of community very much evidenced in the popular sitcom, "Friends." For them, the Brave New World of the next century does not mean an individualistic abandonment of each other, their parents or grandparents, or of social cohesion; they are not a go-it-alone or survival-of-the-fittest bunch. As a result, they envision a Social Security that is both secure and "social." And unlike their want-it-all-now forebears, they are willing to pay for it. They just want a better return on investment, a more modernized program that takes advantage of information technology, and a decentralized program that gives them more control over the funds. One survey of 18- to 29-year-olds found that 94 percent believed that Social Security payments were essential and even though the majority thought they might do better investing their own money, 90 percent wanted Social Security to be there just in case.

If we listened to Generation X, we would construct a system that retained Social Security's current guarantee of a minimally decent retirement for all working Americans and helped those hindered by misfortune, while still trusting most Americans to take care of themselves. Ideologues who believe that the political changes of the '90s are the wave of the future are no more in touch with tomorrow's leaders than are those trapped in the '60s, '70s or '80s. A politics dedicated to both individual autonomy and responsibility on the one hand, and social commitment and compassion on the other, would be reflective of the values of Generation X. That makes these young people a far better bet to uphold these essentially American values than some of their self-interested and ideologically absorbed elders (those of us over thirty) who have dominated the debate over their children's retirement while their own remains virtually untouched and secure.

This doesn't mean we need an intergenerational war over Social Security: As far as I can tell, Generation Xers certainly don't want one—despite press reports to the contrary. But we do need to reach out to this younger generation to learn from them and engage them in designing what is their future. Reaching them is going to take some work. They won't be found as some well-organized lobby group in the Beltway (a real Xer disdains such associations). Nor will their voices be heard through a few token appointees to a panel or at well-staged town meetings—they see through the hype.

We will need to cast a wide net and tap into them through the places and institutions where they—not we—like to "hang": the Internet, campuses, vocational schools, electronic magazines and MTV, the local coffeehouse or micro-brewery, on the loading docks of employers like UPS and the retail stores in America's malls, on the floors of computer shows, and through television talk shows.

It will take a real commitment to involve our young people in this great debate. But solving the future of Social Security without their values will yield results poorer than what they deserve and surely less than what prior generations would have wanted left to them.

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Why Parents Still Matter

Children learn a lot from their peers—but not everything

By Marjorie Williams

WHAT A CHUMP I'VE BEEN. All those nights of dragging myself down the hallway to answer the cries of a lonely or frightened child. All those baby-sitters I've interviewed to be sure I'm leaving my kids with a nice one. All those moments in which I've bitten back a temporary fury, forcing myself to speak patiently to my intransigent son or daughter. According to Judith Rich Harris, the author of this controversial new book, none of these actions, or my failure to take them in the future, is going to have any lasting effect on my children at all.

THE NURTURE ASSUMPTION: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do - Parents Matter Less Than You Think and Peers Matter More
By Judith Rich Harris
The Free Press, $26

The Nurture Assumption, which was born to a glowing profile in *The New Yorker* and a *Newsweek* cover story, is commonly referred to as the Parents-Don't-Matter book. Bluntly, it is Harris's thesis that the only lasting influences on one's personality are genes and peers—the peer groups of childhood and adolescence. Our common belief that what parents say and do to children will have a crucial effect on their lives is simply a mass delusion, nothing more than "a cherished cultural myth."

Harris has an interesting history. Thrown out of Harvard's graduate program in psychology as a nonconformist, and bedridden for much of her adulthood by an autoimmune disease, she became a writer of college psychology textbooks—work she could do from home. That work enrolled her in a running seminar on the latest research in developmental psychology, while her isolation encouraged her to see all that work with an outsider's skepticism. Now a 60-year-old grandmother, she had a Road-to-Damascus experience one day ("It was January 20, 1994") while reading a study of why adolescents so often break the law. It was, the researcher suggested, a bid for "mature status, with its consequent power and privilege."

Wait, thought Harris; that can't be right. Teenagers aren't trying to be good grown-ups ("If teenagers wanted to be like adults they wouldn't be shoplifting nailpolish from drugstores or hanging off overpasses to spray I LOVE YOU LISA on the arch. They would be doing boring adult things like sorting the laundry and figuring out their income taxes"); no, they're trying to be successful teenagers.

In this beginning, Harris found the germ of a theory that enabled her to explain away all the anomalies that had troubled her in the literature on parenting styles and child development: essentially, the fact that all the developmental psychology research in the world had failed to nail down any significant, predictable correlations between how parents treat their kids and how those kids turn out—any that could not instead be laid at the door of their genetic link, that is.

Harris believes, in keeping with the research of behavioral geneticists, that about 50 percent of any person's fate is written by his or her genetic endowments. (And the way she lays out and explains this research is among the best services of her book.) But the other 50 percent, she now claims, is purely a function of the child's education at the hands of peers. "The world that children share with their peers is what shapes their behavior and modifies the characteristics they were born with, and hence

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determines the sort of people they will be when they grow up."

In other words, Harris writes, the Battle of Waterloo really *was* won on the playing fields of Eton: the one place the boys of England's upper classes socialized only with their peers.

This is a fascinating, wildly entertaining, and in many ways persuasive book. Harris is a wonderful writer, who doesn't stop at drawing research from fields as varied as behavioral psychology, ethnology, evolution and sociology; she also draws cultural allusion from sources as disparate as "Little House on the Prairie," Darwin, and Dave Barry. She leads the reader with a sort of motherly asperity, and lards her theories with nice, dry observations. In writing, for example, about the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, she notes that this great preacher of the inherent goodness of the newborn "had no children of his own—that is, he *reared* none of his own. The babies born to his long-time mistress were deposited one by one, with his full knowledge, at the door of a foundling home. They may have been born good but they were not born lucky."

But an author this clever is certainly canny enough to overstate her case for dramatic effect, and this is what I believe Harris has done. There is a great deal of value in her book (some of the most valuable material, in fact, has been the least noticed in much coverage of Harris's work). You can't help feeling the justice of her observation that parents of my generation have come to see childhood as the story of parenthood—a drama about *us*, and *our* nifty insights into what our children want and need. Harris's contempt for modern parents' conviction that our readings of "Good Night Moon" are all-important is, for the most part, a healthy corrective. And she has a true compassion for the parents on the opposite side of that coin: the parents of difficult children, men and woman who have done the world's hardest job and been blamed for bad results that really aren't any fault of theirs.

In support of her thesis, she does an impressive job of knocking down the studies that have simply assumed that home life is the primary, and formative, element in the child's environment. Once she has led you through the available research, you'll believe that divorce doesn't cause children lasting harm—at least, not once you've taken into account the important ways that divorce affects children's peer relationships, by impoverishing parents and often forcing them to move. You'll grant a far greater latitude to the influence of genes on personality. You may have learned some respect for the inherent toughness and creativity of children amid their peers—not to mention some humility about your powers (and your gifts) as a parent. And you might even have come to believe that child-rearing, like real estate, is about one important thing: location, location, location. For the one key way in which Harris thinks parents can affect their children's lives is by choosing neighborhoods and schools in which their peers are more likely to value books, learning, and society's good opinion.

But there are three important ways in which she's overstated her case.

The first concerns the slippery subject of genes. In pointing up the huge extent to which genes determine personality, she also writes off as unaffected by parental behavior a large number of *indirect* genetic effects. It's true, she grants, that nice, socially competent, peaceable parents tend to treat their children well and to produce nice, socially competent, peaceable children. But to a large extent, that may be because nice, etc. parents tend to have children who are nice, etc. to begin with, by virtue of their genes. So far so good. However, she goes too far in her next step: If there are some correlations between the way nice people treat their children and the way those children turn out, she says, it may also be because likable (nice, socially competent, peaceable) children have the "child-to-parent" effect of being easy to love. In other words, their parents will have "good" child-rearing styles because their children aren't terribly challenging to raise. This is undoubtedly true. But Harris scores this, too, as a genetic effect—albeit an indirect one—and therefore discards the entire family as having nothing to tell us about the effects of family environment on children.

But in doing this, she's throwing out a huge part of the relevant sample. Just because science can't tease apart the difference between nature and nurture in such cases doesn't mean that they're not both in there; it only means that science, in its current state, can't tell us everything we need to know.

Which is also the lesson of her rhetorical overreach. What she really succeeds in showing is, as she writes at one point, that "parents have no predictable effects on their children." Regard the loophole closely: it suggests that parents may have *unpredictable* effects on their children. In an example she gives, it is possible that if two siblings have dour, undemonstrative parents, one could imagine them reacting in opposite ways: one might become dour and undemonstrative, and the other might become lively and effervescent in compensation for her gloomy home. Har-

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ris is so gleeful at having proven that the scientists can't predict which way a child will go that she glides right past what she's just conceded: that whichever way the children react, the parents have had an effect.

When Harris speaks of children who become "competent" and "successful" adults, one has to credit her conclusion that there is no correlation between the subject's competence and success—none, anyway, that can't be attributed to genes—and the way their parents raised them. But I know competent and successful adults—people who function, people who excel, even people who are nice—whose lives I wouldn't wish on a dog because of the way they are trammeled by old griefs and unseen legacies; in short, by neurosis. Don't we all?

This is where Harris's book is least satisfactory. *You only think* that your mother's emotional parsimony made you needy. *You only believe* that trying to measure up to the exacting standards of your distant father made you anxious and ambitious. *We only assume* that Bill Clinton has made a mess of his presidency for reasons that reach back, in part, to his father's death and his mother's ways of coping and his stepfather's alcoholism. Harris seems never to consider the possibility that much of the marginal but rich human drama that occupies a huge portion of our emotional and intellectual energy might simply elude the tools with which scientists regard human life. I found suspect her very curt explanation of why we come out of childhood believing in the weight of our parents' influence: The part of the brain that processes relationships, she asserts, is accessible to our conscious mind, while the part that is socialized by peers works largely by unconscious means. Really? Who says so?

Finally, Harris fails to notice an important contradiction in her own work. Parents can't make their children love books by reading aloud to them every night; they can only throw them in the way of peer groups in which reading is valued, or at least not derided. But where do you find such peer groups? Why, in communities of other like-minded parents who read aloud to their children every night. Harris grants that children's cultures will adapt a good deal from their parents' cultures, absent some compelling kid-reason not to, but she won't admit that those parental cultures can be reduced, at some point, to lots of individual parents making those supposedly-useless individual choices in their homes.

That said, Harris offers a wealth of information about peers' influence on children that should be read by every parent—and perhaps by every policymaker. The crux of her argument about how peers' behavior shapes a child relies on the evolution of group behavior: primates, she writes, have for millennia built social groups which define themselves in opposition to other groups. Group A shares certain characteristics, group B another set; and in order to understand themselves and create group loyalty, the two groups then exaggerate the characteristics that first defined them.

Harris believes that this explains everything from the way little boys and girls choose their toys to the reasons academic achievement is seen as "acting white" by African Americans in many city schools. (If this point seems obvious, I am doing violence to the breadth of Harris's review of these theories, including her wonderful summary of the experiments sociologists have done showing how easily student-subjects can be induced, by the power of suggestion, to identify with a wholly invented group.) If girls do less well at math, it is not because boys shout them down and sexist teachers don't call on them; it is because "group contrast effects" have worked away, since pre-school, on their self-concepts.

If Harris is right about all this, her work challenges some important orthodoxies in education. The liberal emphasis in today's schools on diversity, for example, may underscore rather than combat children's sense of belonging to their own ethnic "group." And the more homogeneous the classroom, Harris writes, the less likely children are to splinter into groups that assign the characteristic of academic achievement to only one or two of the groups; if true, this would suggest that racial integration in the classroom is an even more impossible dream than we already knew. Curiously, not much research has been done into such questions as how these classroom splits can be prevented, and whether the norms of children's groups can be deliberately influenced from the outside.

No one reading the passion with which Harris tackles these issues could come away from her book with the message that has, unfairly, been attributed to her—that it doesn't matter how you treat your children. Of course it does, Harris writes, for the same reason it matters how you treat your spouse: because they are human, and because the way you behave certainly will affect your relationships with those people. The paragraph with which I opened this review was, in fact, mostly facetious. Go to your child in the middle of the night, Harris would say, and comfort her; not because it will make her emotionally secure 20 years from now, or because she is forming a template for every relationship she will ever have, but because she is frightened and she is small, and it is in your

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power to make her feel better.

And when you really think about it, this is a more humane reason to treat your child well than the grandiose assumption that your every action will have some power over her future. The "nurture assumption" that Harris attacks is almost by definition a narcissistic one—even if it's narcissism with a bit of masochism thrown in. In closing, Harris writes that "The nurture assumption has turned children into objects of anxiety... Not only have [parents] become servants to their children: They have been declared unsatisfactory servants, because the standards set by the promulgators of the nurture assumption are so high that no one can meet them."

So take Harris's book as an eye-opening chance to deepen your appreciation of your children's complexity—and to leaven, a little bit, your load. Mix it with the evidence of your senses. And as my mother used to say, while wending her trackless way through my childhood: eat what you like and leave the rest. ◎

It Takes a Nation

Is the income gap a symptom or a cause of our social ills?

By Michael Lind

CREATED UNEQUAL: The Crises in American Pay
By James K. Galbraith
The Free Press, $26

THE LONG BOOM OF THE U.S. economy in the late 1990s has diverted attention from a trend that has continued since the early 1970s: growing income inequality.

For a generation, inequality in both income and wealth has risen dramatically; at the same time, wages for middle-income workers have stagnated and low-income workers have lost ground. In *Created Unequal*, a brilliant and iconoclastic examination of the major social trend of our time, James K. Galbraith, who teaches at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs in Austin, Texas, argues that the growth in wage inequality is not an inevitable reality to which we must be resigned.

Galbraith's major target is the explanation of rising inequality as the result of differentials in levels of skill among Americans that are rewarded by an efficient labor market. According to Galbraith's elaborate dissection of the dogma of the natural rate of unemployment (or NAIRU—nonaccelerating inflation rate of unemployment), the labor market itself is a myth: "Labor supply, labor demand, the natural rate equilibrium, 'market wages': each one of these ideas flows from a simple supply-and-demand diagram. Taken together, they describe conditions in a market that does not exist and never has existed, a market that is only an image, a market for a commodity that itself is only a vague abstraction, a figment of long-dead economics professors' imaginations." How, then, are wages and salaries determined? "The answer is institutions, customs, privilege, social relations, history, law, and above all, power."

The power to set wages can take the form either of economic monopoly power or naked political power. Instead of a single fluid labor market that rewards highly-skilled individuals, Galbraith identifies a "three-level economy" divided between the K-sector (knowledge or high tech), the C-sector (consumption goods), and the S-sector (the service economy). Galbraith argues that technological innovation, by producing monopolies, enriches K-sector workers and industries at the expense of those in the C- and S-sectors. "Both technology and trade strengthen the K-sector at the expense of the C-sector, not because they, 'enhance skills'—workers in the C-sector can be just as highly skilled as anyone else—but because they strenghten the monopoly position of K-sector firms, and because they weaken the bargaining power of C-sector workers. Since the C-sector is vast and the K-sector is comparatively small, the result is an upward distribution of income." The unorganized, low-skilled workers in the S-sector—janitors, for example—suffer not so much from technology as from political powerlessness: "Workers are easily replaced, the necessary skills are

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acquired in a few days, turnover is high, and the sector is the last resort of all those who might be displaced from higher-order occupations."

If Galbraith is right, the fortunes of Bill Gates and the rest of the cyber-rich reflect not their superior skills, but the fact that the computer industry is extracting monopoly rents from the rest of society. They are in the position of the railroad barons of yesteryear, who reaped windfalls from the dependence on their technology of both manufacturers and farmers. Far from promoting social equality, Galbraith argues, technological innovation creates new inequalities which can be addressed only by political means. In making this argument, Galbraith is in a distinguished American tradition: "The theory of monopoly and economic power has powerful development in the works of Thorstein Veblen, Joseph Schumpeter—and I should be remiss not to mention John Kenneth Galbraith."

In the most stimulating section of *Created Unequal*, Galbraith *fils*, showing some of the polemical flair of Galbraith *père*, ridicules the "New Victorians" of the right and neoliberals, whom he describes as "supply-side liberals." The New Victorians—the Reaganites and Thatcherites—argue that the hard-working rich should be taxed less while the frivolous majority should save more. Galbraith excoriates "a stale religion of the virtues of saving, of thrift, of accumulation—a kind of reborn Victorianism for the masses" that makes personal savings and federal deficit reductions proof of Calvinist election. "The problem with this revived liturgy of national self-improvement," Galbraith writes, "is that, unlike the old Victorianism, which was a creed meant for the rich alone, the new one is directed at an audience incapable of responding in any substantial way." At the end of the Reagan era in 1989, the top 20 percent of American households controlled 94 percent of total financial wealth; within this group, the top 1 percent controlled almost half of the country's financial wealth. Telling the bottom 80 percent of American households, who controlled 6 percent of financial wealth, that they should save more to raise the national savings rate was absurd and insulting. As for the claim that reducing taxes on the rich would inspire them to work harder, benefiting society as a whole, Galbraith notes that the result of Reaganism was "a consumption binge, one that occurred strictly among the wealthy, who enjoyed almost all of the net income gains of that period and almost all of the increase in living standards. The price they paid was to expose themselves to the country as the irresponsible people that in fact they were."

Galbraith is just as withering in his criticism of "supply-side liberalism"—the claim that the cure for rising inequality in the U.S. is better education for American workers. According to Galbraith, the decline of Keynesian macroeconomics as the intellectual paradigm of the center-left in the 1970s cleared the way for the emergence, in the 1980s and 1990s, of "competitive internationalists" including thinkers like "Robert Reich, Ira Magaziner, Robert Kuttner and Lester Thurdow" as well as politicians like Gary Hart and Bill Clinton. The competitive internationalists supported "a triad of initiatives, a holy trinity of modern American supply-side liberalism: research, education, infrastructure." Galbraith questions whether the trinity can be expected to produce economic and social equality. Because technology tends to increase inequality, at least at first, "government support for research and development cannot be thought of as a wage or income leveler. The effect of such policies on the income distribution almost certainly works the other way!" As for education, "What the existing economy needs is a fairly small number of first-rate technical talents, combined with a superclass of managers and financiers, on top of a vast substructure of nominally literate and politically apathetic working people." What about infrastructure? "Advanced, export-oriented America is not seriously hamstrung by infrastructure problems. What is missing is investment in such things as public libraries, parks, city streets and sidewalks, and urban mass transit. Big business gets the infrastructure it needs, and for the rest neither demands great improvements nor suffers unduly when spending is cut back." In effect, Galbraith accuses supply-side liberals of trying to sell desirable liberal social reforms to big business: "The unpleasant conclusion is that the liberal mainstream, spearheaded in recent years by competitiveness progressives, has been spinning illusions in all the areas where it has tried to have an impact, trying to find a useful and utilitarian niche in an unacommodating, business-dominated world that is brutally skeptical of the nonutilitarian." It is more honest to argue that better schools, parks, and public transit are good for America, whether or not they are good for General Motors.

Like his argument for public goods, Galbraith's argument for equality is ultimately a political and moral one, inspired by a vision of the good society. While equality "makes people feel similar to other people," high inequality makes it "easy to know whether one is likely in the long run to be a net gainer, or a net loser, from public programs of family assistance, pension security, and health car'". According to Galbraith, "The rise in inequality is the cause of our dreadful political condition. It is the cause of the bitter and unending

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struggle over the Transfer State, of the ugly battles over welfare, affirmative action, health care, social security, and the even uglier preoccupation in some circles with the alleged relationship of race, intelligence, and earning." Like many social-democratic liberals, Galbraith is too willing to assume that racial tensions can be cured by widespread prosperity. Affirmative action, for example, is a zero-sum game, in which what is at stake is relative social status (attending a first-tier university rather than a second-tier university) as much as absolute goods like income. What is more, the Right profits from, but did not create, the anxiety of working-class and middle-class Americans about the genuine social pathologies of the inner-city poor, like a high rate of criminal violence and a rising rate of illegitimacy. Galbraith's "true progressives" should reject the right's panacea—the reduction or abolition of spending on the poor—along with its covert eugenic rationale. But higher wages and benefits alone will not change the culture of fatherlessness in the inner city, or make it less necessary for middle-income Americans to put bars on their windows and alarms in their cars.

Galbraith concludes with a manifesto: "I call on those who read these pages, whether they are economists or not, in positions of influence or not, to consider the possibility of a politics of full employment, low and stable interest rates, stronger economic growth, higher minimum wages, and declining inequality." In the final section of *Created Unequal,* he sets forth a program that could unite what he calls "true progressives" and populists at the cost of horrifying free-market conservatives. Its elements include, among other things, democratic reform of the Federal Reserve; fighting inflation by means of "heterodox stabilization," involving low interest rates and wage pacts, rather than "tight money and balanced budgets"; and a higher minimum wage subject to a discretionary annual adjustment by the president.

All of which raises the question: You and whose army? According to Galbraith, "We will have to accept a certain social discipline on our individual chances, to increase the prospects of rising as a group." The problem lies in the definitions of "we" and "our." A case can be made that Galbraith, in attributing racial and ethnic tensions to inequality, has got the relationship between economic equality and a sense of national or racial community backward. The most egalitarian countries in the world are the nation-states of Northwestern Europe and East Asia—countries that are racially and culturally homogeneous and also have low rates of immigration. The architects of the Swedish welfare state and Japanese corporate paternalism have been able to call on a powerful sense of ethnocultural nationality that transcended class differences. Would ethnic Swedes support a welfare state disproportionately used by ethnic Lapps? Would Japanese voters support corporate practices that disproportionately benefited Korean immigrants?

The United States is no exception to the rule. What made the New Deal possible between the '30s and the '60s was an unofficial white American cultural nationalism shared by white workers in the North who kept blacks out of unions and white Southern politicians who wrote New Deal legislation to exclude mostly-black agricultural and domestic workers. It is probably no coincidence that progressive-liberal economic egalitarianism had its greatest successes in the U.S. between the '40s and '60s, a generation after the shut-off of mass European immigration accelerated amalgamation in the white-only melting pot. Nor is it a coincidence that the Civil Rights revolution drove most of the former constituents of the New Deal Democratic coalition into the Republican party, where they now vote against government programs identified with "others"—blacks and immigrants.

Since the '60s, multicultural identity politics has made it difficult if not impossible for egalitarian liberals to appeal to a common American fate, to use terms like "us" and "our" without qualification. The most popular alternative to racial identity politics, a "civic" nationalism, is no more helpful. A purely territorial and political definition of American identity is too vague and insipid to inspire personal and collective sacrifice, including the sacrifice of higher taxes. Rejecting trans-racial cultural nationalism as the rationale for social equality, egalitarians in the United States tend to fall back on vague appeals to social justice inspired by Marxism or the Protestant Social Gospel. But what if a politics of extreme cultural pluralism or post-national cosmopolitanism is incompatible with a politics of egalitarian nationalism? What if it is necessary to choose between diversity and solidarity? Nothing short of an American nationalism that is more compelling than racial and ethnic particularisms seems capable of providing the sense of community that can inspire a new politics of economic and social equality.

James K. Galbraith has sketched out the political economy of an egalitarian America. All that is lacking is an America. ●

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The Symbolic Justice

Thurgood Marshall was a great litigator, but not a great Justice

By David J. Garrow

THURGOOD MARSHALL: American Revolutionary
By Juan Williams
Times Books, $30

THURGOOD MARSHALL ought to be remembered more for his twenty-three years of work as director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (1938-1961) than for his twenty-four years of service as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court (1967-1991). During his time as the NAACP's top lawyer, Marshall won a long list of landmark Supreme Court cases and had great fun doing so. Badly miscast as an appellate judge, Marshall's record as a justice was highly disappointing, and the reclusive strictures of judicial life transformed the once happy lawyer into a depressed and eventually angry jurist.

Marshall grew up in the racially mixed world of Baltimore, Maryland, influenced more by his mother, who taught in an all-black public school for discriminatorily low wages, than by his alcoholic father. Juan Williams, in his informative and perceptive new biography, attributes Marshall's optimistically integrationist legal vision to his early life experiences in Baltimore. Williams likewise ascribes Marshall's early courtroom agenda of challenging discriminatory teachers' salaries and whites-only state-supported law schools to the home state practices that had disadvantaged his mother and kept him from applying to the University of Maryland rather than to Howard University's School of Law.

Marshall graduated from Howard Law in 1933, and within four years Marshall's Howard mentor, Charles H. Houston, brought his 28 year-old protege up to New York City as his only aide in the NAACP's nascent legal office. Two years later Marshall succeeded Houston in the top job and began litigating the long string of constitutional challenges to southern segregation that culminated in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Along the way Marshall won other notable victories—such as *Smith v. Allwright* (1944), abolishing "white primaries," and *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948), voiding racially restrictive housing covenants—which nowadays are no longer as famous as *Brown*. For Marshall those years were a nonstop bout of "frantic activity," not only because of the dozens of anti-segregation cases Marshall helped prepare but also on account of the endless requests for legal aid that poured into NAACP headquarters from individual black citizens who were suffering abuse in one or another corner of America's criminal justice system.

His workload notwithstanding, Marshall had tremendous fun during the '40s and early '50s, Williams explains, because "he liked people, and he liked to travel. He enjoyed going out drinking . . . until the small hours of the morning" in whatever locale his NAACP work had taken him to. Marshall also fared well even in the rigidly racist worlds of southern jails and courtrooms, for "he was a charmer who got along well with whites."

Throughout those years, and especially during the crucial 1952-1955 period in which Marshall and his NAACP colleagues on three separate occasions argued the *Brown* set of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, Marshall displayed what in retrospect can only be seen as a blissfully naive and optimistic attitude toward what would follow from Supreme Court condemnation of segregated schools. Not only did Marshall and other NAACP leaders erroneously anticipate that the actual process of school desegregation would be relatively quick and untroubled; Marshall also blithely asserted that Black America would happily and eagerly assimilate itself into the mainstream white culture. "What's going to happen to the 'Negro College'?" Marshall asked an audience four months before *Brown* ordered an end to racial segregation. "I'll tell you what's going to happen. It's going to cheerfully drop the word 'Negro' from its name."

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Williams astutely portrays the extent to which the Thurgood Marshall of 1954 sounded like the Ward Connerly or Shelby Steele of the 1990s. One month after *Brown*, Marshall declared that every American ought to be judged on "individual merit rather than to be limited by such irrelevant considerations as race and color."

But the happy, victorious, and optimistic Thurgood Marshall of 1954 was shortlived, for an underappreciated transformation was in the offing. Some of the change stemmed from the early 1955 death of Marshall's wife Buster. Their relationship "had become distant and lifeless" well before 1955, both because of Marshall's constant travels and because of their inability to have children. Her death led to exceptionally intense unpleasantness between her family and Marshall, and Marshall's Legal Defense Fund deputy Jack Greenberg told Williams that Marshall "was really in very bad shape" and "really didn't function for a period of maybe several years in his job" following Buster's death.

Marshall nonetheless remarried to Cecile "Cissy" Suyatt, an NAACP secretary of Filipino extraction with whom he soon had two boys, but the years after *Brown* were not happy ones for either Marshall or the NAACP. Segregationists waged an intense war not just to obstruct *Brown* but also to put the NAACP and its lawyers out of business all across the south, and Marshall and his colleagues now spent most of their time playing defense, not offense.

Marshall also felt surprisingly and increasingly distant from the younger civil rights proponents who were giving new leadership to black activism in the south. Marshall had been highly ambivalent about the international attention and credit that had been given to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctrine of nonviolent resistance as a result of the successful boycott of segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955-1956, and the rise of the black student protest movement, starting with the "sit-ins" of early 1960, intensified Marshall's unhappiness all the more. Williams writes that "the question for Thurgood Marshall was whether the times had passed him by," but even Williams' thoughtful and empathetic account leaves one puzzled as to why Marshall felt so alienated from the younger activists who had been stimulated by and now were building upon Marshall's courtroom triumphs.

Marshall had turned fifty in the summer of 1958, just days before the birth of his own second son, and Williams leaves little doubt that Marshall had decided he wanted out of his NAACP top lawyer's job even well before President John F. Kennedy nominated him to a judgeship on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in Manhattan, in the fall of 1961.

Williams states early on that Marshall "had a desperate need to be respected," and Marshall's belief that his successful lawyering for the NAACP ought to result in his being honored with an important judgeship had been growing for some years prior to 1961. Williams presents Marshall's interest in a judicial appointment—and particularly Marshall's insistence on a higher-ranking and more prestigious appellate post rather than simply a federal trial court appointment—as involving both pride and money; a judgeship would also represent a significant salary increase.

But Williams does not fully address the question of whether Marshall was fundamentally "burned out" as an active civil rights litigator and was looking for some honorable form of quasi-retirement. Twenty-five years of such intense and exhausting lawyering as Marshall had undertaken was perhaps indeed an entire lifetime's worth of achievement, and Williams suggests that Marshall's desire for an appellate judgeship had little if anything to do with the actual work of judging and everything to do with his sense of being entitled to an honorific status that carried with it a guaranteed lifetime salary.

The two most fundamental mysteries of Thurgood Marshall's life—why he felt so alienated from the black protest movement of the '50s and '60s, and why he so misjudged his own aptitudes in aspiring for the appellate bench—thus both fall within the least noted period of his life, following his victory in *Brown* and preceding his 1967 nomination to the Supreme Court. Marshall's entirely unremarkable service on the Second Circuit stretched from 1961 until 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson drafted him to be U.S. Solicitor General, the executive branch's top voice in front of the Supreme Court. Marshall was understandably reluctant to give up his lifetime judgeship for a short-term presidential appointment, but he and Johnson, like much of the rest of the country's legal and political elite, both understood that the Solicitor Generalship was less an appointment in its own right than it was a trial run to see whether Marshall's performance in a high-visibility Washington post would be sufficiently adept to justify Johnson making him America's first African-American Supreme Court justice. Two years later, when Johnson's nomination of Acting Attorney General Ramsey Clark for the permanent position all but forced Clark's father, Justice Tom C. Clark, to announce his retirement from the bench so as to avoid an unseemly

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conflict of interest, Johnson felt comfortable enough with Marshall's record of high-profile advocacy to proceed with his nomination. At the age of fifty-nine, Thurgood Marshall ascended to a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Less than twenty percent of Williams' biography is devoted to Marshall's twenty-four years (1967-1991) of service on the Supreme Court, and anyone seeking a comprehensive overview of Marshall's judicial contributions ought to turn to the second of Mark Tushnet's two important scholarly volumes on Marshall, *Making Constitutional Law*. Lyndon Johnson all but explicitly acknowledged that his selection of Marshall was as much the nomination of a symbol as it was the nomination of an individual, and Marshall's presence on the High Court during the '70s and '80s indeed often seemed more symbolic than tangible.

One month after Brown, Marshall declared that every American ought to be judged on "individual merit rather than to be limited by such irrelevant considerations as race and color."

Williams portrays Marshall as having been considerably more engaged in the internal work of the Court during his first years on the bench than was usually the case later on, but even in 1967 some of his closest friends and colleagues viewed Marshall as a significantly troubled man. Williams shies from calling Marshall a sexual harasser, but he quotes one of Marshall's top deputies in the Solicitor General's office as acknowledging that Marshall had "a tendency to let his hands stray" and often "was less than entirely subtle" in expressing affection. Former Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach told Williams that "I expect Thurgood always had a little bit of a drinking problem, but it never interfered with his work." Yet one of Marshall's oldest friends related how Marshall when drunk "would accost women, any woman," and recounted one episode in which companions "had to drag Marshall into the house after he grabbed a woman."

More intriguing than accounts of judicial disengagement or unseemly personal behavior, however, is the question of how and why Marshall changed from an assimilation-minded integrationist in the '50s to an angry and bitter "race man" by the late '80s and early '90s. Williams acknowledges this transformation, but pays it much less attention than he should. Marshall's closest friend on the Court, the late William J. Brennan, Jr., told Williams that among the justices themselves, Marshall regularly employed edgy racial humor "no matter how uneasy it made any of us." Williams may not have fully appreciated the significance of Brennan, an amazingly charitable man, having told him that even "I got worried about whether he carried that too far." Brennan completely shared Marshall's view that racial discrimination continued to permeate American life, but in a remarkable statement he told Williams that "I will not accept his feeling that that may also have been true of our colleagues, that they are personally racist or that their votes reflect any racism."

Williams' book leaves a definitive account of Marshall's Supreme Court service for some subsequent author, but his portrait of Marshall the man is rich and valuable, even if he fails to plumb fully some of the most fascinating complexities of Marshall's life. Williams has a repeated weakness for using oral recollections, by both Marshall and others, without confirming or disproving the stories' accuracy from other available sources. Sometimes, as in his highly overblown account of Marshall's supposed "alliance" or "secret ties" to J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, Williams shows himself to be amazingly credulous and uncritical. Law professors will be especially disappointed by Williams' legal missteps, particularly his staggering omission of one of Marshall's most important pre-*Brown* Supreme Court victories, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950).

But those shortcomings detract surprisingly little from what overall is an excellent and important book. Williams insists that Marshall was "a genuine American revolutionary," one of those few Americans "who literally transformed their nation and defined not only their era but what would come after them." Academic historians will cavil at Williams's overly-individualistic assertion that "it was Marshall who ended legal segregation in the United States," but few could quarrel with Lewis F. Powell, Jr.'s more precise avowal that Marshall "did more to establish equal justice under the law than Martin Luther King Jr., or any other single individual." Juan Williams' biography of Marshall is neither definitive nor perfect, but it's an admirable portrait of a superb litigator whose undistinguished judicial record should not be allowed to eclipse his remarkable earlier achievements. ●

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Style, not Substance

Affirmative action is not as liberal as you think

By Richard D. Kahlenberg

THE SHAPE OF THE RIVER: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions
By William G. Bowen and Derek Bok
Princeton University Press, $24.95

THE SHAPE OF THE RIVER, says *The New York Times*, is meant to "lead the charge in a liberal counteroffensive" on affirmative action. But the study, conducted by former Princeton president William Bowen and former Harvard president Derek Bok, is neither a "counteroffensive" nor particularly "liberal." The book successfully rebuts only the weakest second-tier arguments against affirmative action, leaving the central attack on racial preferences standing. At the same time, the book is profoundly conservative, rejecting the moral arguments for affirmative action in favor of more "pragmatic" considerations, dismissing as wrong-headed widely-held concerns about fairness in the university admissions process, and rejecting any significant role for universities in promoting social mobility by reaching out to disadvantaged applicants.

As a basis for their study, Bowen and Bok constructed an important new database involving more than 45,000 students from the entering classes of 1976 and 1989 at 28 selective universities. The data generated are of enormous value, shedding new light on subjects that have been shrouded in secrecy: the nature and extent of racial preferences at elite universities, the relative performance of those admitted with preferences, and, most significantly, the eventual success of preferred students in the workplace.

The biggest limitation to the data is Bowen and Bok's decision to restrict analysis to blacks and whites, an unfortunate decision now that the number of Hispanic youth has officially surpassed the number of blacks in the United States. The decision to exclude Asian-Americans is also troubling since Asians play a poignant role in the affirmative action debate as a minority group generally believed to be hurt by race-sensitive admissions.

Bowen and Bok's book seeks to do three things: demonstrate that affirmative action has been a success in creating diverse university learning environments and in promoting qualified blacks into the professional middle class; establish that eliminating racial preferences would undercut these positive gains and that alternatives to racial preferences are wanting; and convince readers that race should be considered an element of "merit" broadly defined. We take each of these three arguments in turn.

Over the Rainbow

Bowen and Bok's data make clear that affirmative action has been good for blacks and good for diversity, effectively rebutting several of the more extreme arguments made by opponents of such programs. The authors find that blacks admitted to the 28 elite colleges were in fact able to compete. Although blacks were admitted with lower average academic credentials than whites and earned lower grades in college, the vast majority graduated, many went on to graduate school, and eventually took on leadership roles in public and private life. Significantly, blacks admitted to the 28 schools graduated at a higher rate than those blacks who attended less selective schools.

Bowen and Bok find little evidence that preferences stigmatize blacks and leave them doubting whether they deserved to be admitted. Only 6 percent of blacks in the 1976 cohort said they were dissatisfied with their college experience, the same level as found among whites. Even among black students scoring over 1300 on the SAT, students less likely to need preferences and therefore most likely to resent the assumption that they benefitted, 75 percent of 1989 matriculants said colleges should place "a great deal" of emphasis on racial diversity. There is also evidence of significant interaction among students of different races. In the

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1989 cohort, more than half of white students said they knew two or more black students "well", while 88 percent of blacks reported knowing two or more white students well.

Bowen and Bok's second major set of arguments is that racial preferences are necessary to achieve diversity at selective universities—and that no alternative program will produce sufficient racial diversity. Based on their research, the authors argue that if race sensitive admissions are ended, black matriculation would drop almost by half, from 7.1 percent to 3.6 percent. This drop will mean that fewer white students will know black students well (49 percent as opposed to 60 percent). This would be a disturbing development, but preventing it is hardly the type of "compelling state interest" the Supreme Court requires to justify racial preferences. Substituting class-based preferences for racial preferences won't produce much racial diversity at elite universities, they add. In an uncharacteristically superficial discussion, Bowen and Bok note that their own data are incomplete and rely, instead, on the studies of others who have found that "income-based" affirmative action will primarily benefit poor whites rather than poor blacks.

But UCLA Law School has found that a more sophisticated definition of class—one that looks beyond income to include such factors as neighborhood poverty and family net worth—can provide significant racial diversity (See "In Search of Fairness" *The Washington Monthly*, June 1998). Class is not a perfect proxy for race, and so racial preferences provide a better guarantee of a given racial result, but remember, we're talking about the difference between 7.1 percent representation with race-sensitive admissions and 3.6 percent without, so even marginal gains are important.

Back to Class

Bowen and Bok's third major contention is that race-sensitive admissions are justified because race can be considered an element of "merit." This is the centerpiece of the affirmative action debate, and here the authors are on their weakest grounds yet. It is here that the truly conservative nature of their argument manifests itself most fully. The authors contend that "race is relevant in determining which candidates 'merit' admission because taking account of race helps institutions achieve three objectives central to their mission—identifying individuals with high potential, permitting students to benefit educationally from diversity on campus, and addressing long-term societal needs."

In the first prong—identifying individuals with high potential—Bowen and Bok sensibly argue that in determining a teenager's long run potential, it is relevant to look not only at his or her academic record, but also at "what barriers were overcome." They argue that race is relevant to identifying barriers, noting that "what people have achieved often depends on the families they have grown up in, the neighborhoods in which they have lived, and the schools they have attended as well as their own ability and hard work."

But in their descriptions of why race is an obstacle, they fall back on the language of class. The white daughter of a welfare mother is likely to face the disadvantages of family, neighborhood and school, while the black son of a doctor is not. Moreover, while Bowen and Bok credit preferential policies with helping create "the backbone of the emergent middle class," their own data suggest colleges are in the business of perpetuating rather than creating. The vast majority of blacks enrolled at the 28 elite institutions—86 percent—are from middle or upper status families.

In the mid-1980s, Bok wrote that universities should take the "long view"—that one reason for admitting black students was to help their children have an edge, just as the children of upper status whites have an edge—to create a self-perpetuating black elite alongside the already existing self-perpetuating white elite. This mission also helps explain why Bowen and Bok feel comfortable defending the right of institutions to provide preferences to alumni children if they so desire (a kind of reverse-obstacle preference). Admitting more offspring of the poor and working poor, they argue, is not "realistic." They assert: "It usually requires more than a single generation to move up to the highest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder," as if this fact were an immutable law of nature rather than a terrible indictment of this country's limited social mobility. In arguing that disadvantaged kids cannot normally compete at elite universities, the authors ignore the important evidence they bring to bear in the racial experience, that those receiving some preference can go on to be highly successful.

Bowen and Bok's second major argument for considering race as an element of "merit" is that student diversity is central to a good education. They argue, "It may be perfectly 'fair' to reject an applicant because the college has already enrolled many other students very much like him or her" using the analogy that "good basketball teams include both excellent shooters and sturdy defenders, both point guards and centers."

There are two major problems with the

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argument. First, the casual analogy between basketball positions and race ignores the fundamental precept behind civil rights law: where possible, we ought to judge people by factors at least moderately within their control. Played out in university admissions, we know that Asian-Americans are substantially overrepresented among students who perform at the highest academic levels. Are the authors not concerned about the moral consequences of telling a member of a group that has historically suffered discrimination that it is "perfectly fair" to reject her "because the college has already enrolled many other students very much like" her?

Second, where is the concern about diversity when it comes to disadvantaged students? Bowen and Bok acknowledge that socioeconomic status is an element of diversity: surely a child (of any race) growing up in a housing project adds at least as much diversity as another suburban child (of any race). But the authors' data indicate that in 1989, only 3 percent of the students at the elite colleges studied were from low status backgrounds, compared with 28 percent of families with children of college-going age nationally. In the racial context, 3.6 percent black representation was considered a catastrophe; shouldn't the authors be concerned about the far greater under-representation of poor and working poor students today?

Bowen and Bok's third major argument that race should be an element of "merit" is that there is a special need "to educate students who seem likely to become leaders and contributing members of society" and that at this point in history, there is a greater need for more minority leaders than for more white leaders. For example, American business, the authors note, needs black leaders in order "to understand the markets in which many companies sell and to recruit, manage, and motivate the workforce[.]"

Helping to expand the number of African-American leaders is a laudable goal, and one suspects it is at the end of the day the primary motivation behind race-sensitive admissions. But it is important to note that this rationale, under *Bakke*, is forbidden. Justice Powell called it "discrimination for its own sake." It is conceivable that the Supreme Court could reverse itself on this issue; but almost everyone expects the Court either to sustain *Bakke* as is or to kill it, not to liberalize it.

The problem with this highly pragmatic approach—which lets universities use immutable factors like race in determining where society will get the greatest bang for the buck—is that it leads in directions many of us would not feel comfortable going. Look at the example of women. One of Bowen and Bok's findings is that in April 1995, only 57 percent of white women graduates of the 28 elite universities from the entering cohort of 1976 were in the workforce full-time, compared with 93 percent of white male graduates. Under Bowen and Bok's logic, one could construct an argument that universities should concentrate their resources on men. Gender would count against women, not in an absolute sense, but as one of "many factors" along with grades, SATs, extracurriculars, etc. Why do we recoil at the suggestion? In part, it's that we don't want to judge people by genetic factors which merely correlate with the likelihood of contributing important professional leadership.

In the *Bakke* case, the liberals—Justice Brennan, Justice Marshall, Justice White and Justice Blackmun—argued that racial preferences were needed as a temporary program to compensate for a horrendous legacy of discrimination. They rejected Justice Powell's open-ended argument of diversity. Today, Bowen and Bok carry Powell's flag, explicitly rejecting the liberal compensatory rationale in favor of a hard-headed pragmatism that will win them points in corporate circles. Business is not interested in mushy concepts like compensation, social mobility, or not judging people by immutable characteristics. What business needs now is a steady diet of upper middle class people of color who can help win new markets and manage diverse employees. *The Shape of The River* makes business' case for diversity, a case that is chilling in its emphasis on efficiency over fairness. Maybe this book will help show, in the end, that today's affirmative action is not the liberal program that liberals believe it to be.

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Political Booknotes

Target U.S.A.

by Jeffrey D. Simon

"L.A. BOMBER PLEDGES GAS ATTACK" was the frightening headline that appeared in the Aug. 15, 1974 edition of the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*. A man known only as the "Alphabet Bomber," who turned out to be a mentally unstable engineer from Yugoslavia, had threatened to unleash the chemical nerve agent sarin over Washington, D.C. unless his demands to end all immigration and naturalization laws were met. He had already proven himself deadly with a bombing at Los Angeles International Airport that killed three people. When police searched his apartment after his arrest, they found all the ingredients except one to make a rudimentary nerve gas bomb.

Almost a quarter-century later, the threat of terrorists, criminals, mentally unbalanced individuals, or rogue states acquiring and using nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) weapons is front and center on the national agenda. What the Alphabet Bomber failed to accomplish in the '70s—commit a major attack with a weapon of mass destruction and thereby usher in a new age of terrorism—the Japanese religious cult Aum Shinryko succeeded in doing in the '90s. Their attack in the Tokyo subway system in March 1995 with sarin was the watershed event in launching a major U.S. government effort to shore up this country's defenses against NBC terrorism.

Three months after the Tokyo incident, President Bill Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 39, which made preventing and managing the consequences of a terrorist attack with a weapon of mass destruction "the highest priority" for the United States. Congress has followed suit by allocating hundreds of millions of dollars in recent years to help train first responders—firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel—and the National Guard to deal with the aftermath of a terrorist attack involving NBC weapons. And the military has focused on research and development into detection systems that can give early warning when biological warfare agents, which are invisible and odorless microorganisms, have been released over a particular area.

AMERICA'S ACHILLES' HEEL:
Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Terrorism and Covert Attack
by Richard A. Falkenrath, Robert D. Newman, and Bradley A. Thayer
The MIT Press, $22.50

Yet Richard A. Falkenrath, Robert D. Newman, and Bradley A. Thayer argue that not enough is being done to prepare the United States for NBC terrorism in their timely, compelling, and ambitious book, *America's Achilles' Heel: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Terrorism and Covert Attack.*

The authors correctly depict NBC terrorism as a "quintessential low-probability, high-consequence event" for the United States, but one which is becoming more likely. Among the reasons they cite for their concern is the increased number of non-state actors—terrorists, paramilitary guerrilla groups, cults, militias, organized crime syndicates, lone individuals—that are capable of acquiring NBC weapons either through theft or by building the weapons themselves.

How bad could an NBC attack be? Take the Oklahoma City and World Trade Center bombings, add a few hundred thousand casualties to the death tolls, raise the crisis level throughout the country to unprecedented proportions, and then leave the buildings intact as though nothing had happened, and you begin to get a sense of what may be in store for America should terrorists include biological warfare agents such as anthrax or botulinum toxin in their arsenal of weapons. If they use chemical warfare agents such as sarin or VX, the death toll could be in the tens of thousands. And nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists could be catastrophic for metropolitan areas.

The question for U.S. policymakers is how to prepare for an event that, with the exception of the Tokyo subway incident, has never happened before. This uncertainty has left the door wide open for a diverse group of consultants, government agencies and others to try to cash in on the growing interest—and budget—for NBC terrorism. "Experts" laying claim to some aspect of the NBC terrorism issue—crisis forecasting, consequence management, disaster planning, biotechnology research, medical care, high-tech detection devices—can be found throughout the public and private sectors. One therefore has to wonder whether Falkenrath et al's call for $1 billion to be allocated annually to deal with the NBC terrorist and covert attack threat will really help matters or make them worse by pumping more money into an already oversized NBC weapons bureaucracy.

Moreover, there is a real imbalance in the way the U.S. government is preparing for a possible NBC terrorist incident. There has been gradual acknowledgment in Washington that the United States will not be able to prevent every potential act of NBC terrorism. Yet the American public has been left in the dark on this critical issue. Thus far there have not been any civil defense programs involving the public, nor have there been any public information or education campaigns to alert people as to what to expect or what to do in the aftermath of a NBC terrorist attack. If Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City can build a $15 million emergency control center for his administration that is designed to withstand a nuclear blast and contains a ventilation system that could be

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closed in case of a terrorist attack with chemical or biological weapons, then surely more can be done to increase the survivability chances for the average citizen. As Falkenrath and his colleagues point out, "the lethality of most biological weapons can be reduced more than a thousandfold if the members of the target population simply put on $5 respiratory masks for the duration of the attack."

In at least one respect, the authors of *America's Achilles Heel* may have underestimated the difficulties of preparing for an NBC attack. They claim that if NBC weapons "are detected in advance, covert attacks are relatively easy to defend against." The history of counterterrorist operations, however, is filled with cases where the terrorists were able to set off their explosives or fire their weapons before they were captured or killed. These were risks that were deemed worth taking when the counterterrorist mission was launched. But if that happens with NBC weapons, killing the terrorist won't do the rest of us much good. For that reason alone, *America's Achilles Heel* is a warning well worth heeding.

JEFFREY D. SIMON *is president of Political Risk Assessment Co., Inc. in Santa Monica, California, and the author of* The Terrorist Trap: America's Experience With Terrorism.

Heart of Darkness

by Joshua Hammer

GREAT CRIMES PRODUCE great devils, but the Rwandan genocide was a singular exception. There was no Pol Pot, Radovan Karadzic or Idi Amin—only a faceless cabal of men with long, unpronounceable names hatching a plot in obscurity. Who has ever heard of Theodore Sindikubwabo? Jean Paul Akayesu? Four years after the fact, the Rwandan cataclysm is still perceived by many in the West as a spasm of tribal warfare, not a calculated campaign of extermination.

WE WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT TOMORROW WE WILL BE KILLED WITH OUR FAMILIES:
Stories from Rwanda
by Philip Gourevitch
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux
$25

But a campaign it was, carried out with diabolical efficiency and brutality. Now Philip Gourevitch, a *New Yorker* staff writer and son of Holocaust survivors, has written a terrifying account of the genocide and its aftermath entitled *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda.* Gourevitch's exhaustively reported book provides the most lucid account yet of the plot concocted by radical Hutu ideologues to wipe out the country's minority Tutsi tribe—and the international community's paralysis as the slaughter spread.

There had never been anything like it. Over one hundred days between April and July 1994, one million people were butchered at roadblocks, in churches, in their homes—killed by neighbors and friends, torn apart by grenades, bullets, and machetes. I covered the genocide for *Newsweek*, and the enormity of the slaughter often left me groping for words to describe it. (Full disclosure: I have worked with Gourevitch in Rwanda and am quoted in his book.) But Gourevitch, who didn't arrive in the country until May 1995, convincingly captures the look and feel of the genocide: the lush beauty of the landscape juxtaposed against the stench of death, the repose of skeletons in churches, the eerie stillness in village after village, the chorus of denial issued by the murderers. He humanizes the slaughter, attaching names and faces to both victims and perpetrators. And as he wanders through the charnel house, he repeatedly asks one question: why?

There is no simple answer, but Gourevitch debunks the notion that the genocide was the inevitable result of "ancient" tribal enmities. The hatred was of a more recent vintage. For centuries Tutsis and Hutus were porous constructs—based on class as well as

"Cohen's book is MUST reading."
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Israel became a nuclear power on the eve of the 1967 Six Day War. Yet, to this day, there is still ambiguity surrounding its nuclear capability. Cohen draws on recently declassified American and Israeli documents and extensive interviews with key individuals to deconstruct Israel's policy of secrecy.

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racial distinctions—until Rwanda's Belgian colonizers rigidly divided society along tribal lines. The Belgians granted Tutsis superior status and relegated the Hutus to virtual serfdom. Then, in 1959, the colonizers abruptly switched allegiances, backing the Hutus in an uprising that toppled the Tutsi overlords—and led to 35 years of increasingly brutal majority rule.

Rwanda was thus a polarized society even before a rebel army of Tutsi exiles invaded from Uganda in 1990. The invasion set the stage for the rise of Hutu Power, an ideology of tribal supremacy that proved as virulent as Nazism. With the pacing of a suspense novelist, Gourevitch reveals how anti-Tutsi rhetoric and paranoia culminated in Rwanda's Final Solution. Hutu academics, journalists, and other extremists joined forces to portray all Rwanda's Tutsis as "cockroaches" who must be wiped out to save the country. A shadowy inner circle known as the akazu, led by First Lady Agathe Habyarimana, almost certainly hatched the plot to shoot down the president's plane on April 6, 1994—a Hutu Power *coup d'état* that set the genocide in motion. And Rwanda's tightly organized hierarchy of governors, mayors, teachers, civil servants, and malleable peasants carried the plot forward, masking calculation behind a facade of spontaneity.

The Hutus are not the only culprits in this book. Gourevitch issues a damning indictment of the United Nations, whose top bureaucrats received unequivocal evidence of an imminent Holocaust, but cut and ran after 10 Belgian peacekeepers were murdered and mutilated the first night of the massacres. The United States government behaved with equal cowardice. The Clinton administration went to absurd lengths to avoid using the word "genocide"—a qualification which would have obligated it to intervene as a signatory to the 1948 Genocide Convention. But for dastardly behavior, nobody matched the French. Driven by his friendship with Habyarimana and his distaste for the Anglophone rebels, the late French President Francois Mitterand embraced the genocidaires. The French funneled arms to the Hutus, and in June 1994 they launched a last ditch pro-Hutu intervention dressed up as a humanitarian aid mission.

There are heroes as well. Gourevitch introduces us to the manager of the Mille Collines Hotel in central Kigali—the Rwandan army's ground zero—who mans telephones and dispatches a blizzard of faxes around the world in a Schindler-like attempt to save the lives of Tutsis huddled inside. And he draws a compelling portrait of General Paul Kagame, the quietly charismatic leader of the rebel army, which crushed a force twice its size and then had to rebuild a destroyed country. Kagame's victory was certainly one of the most brilliant military campaigns of the modern era. One of the few shortcomings of Gourevitch's book is his failure to shed light on Kagame's military strategy.

Was Kagame's army guilty of excesses? No question. There was the infamous 1995 massacre at the Kibeho refugee camp, as well as reported killings of several thousand Hutu civilians during the 1996 Rwandan-backed war that overthrew Mobutu in Zaire. But one of the most satisfying aspects of Gourevitch's book is that he places these crimes in their proper perspective. They stemmed largely from strategic imperatives gone wrong—rousting killers from U.N.-run refugee camps, countering the spread of anti-Tutsi pogroms into Zaire—not an ideology of hatred. To draw a moral equivalence between Rwandan Patriotic Army acts and the Hutu-organized slaughter—to say, as one Belgian academic told the *New York Times*, "they're all bad guys"—is sophistry.

In the end, it's the sheer pervasiveness of Hutu guilt that weighs heaviest on the mind. Visiting packed jails and villages where victims and killers live side by side, Gourevitch testifies to the morbid absurdity of Rwanda's plight. How is it possible, he asks, to achieve justice or reconciliation in a country where nearly every person over the age of 12 is a murderer? Under the moral leadership of General Kagame, Rwandan society has limped towards a measure of reconstruction. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed with our Families* offers a few glimmers of optimism within the darkness. But is the darkness that lingers: the spectacle of an entire people roused by their leaders into a methodical campaign of murder. Gourevitch's book is likely to take its place alongside Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as a monumental study of evil in our time.

JOSHUA HAMMER *is the* NEWSWEEK *L.A. Bureau Chief*

Master Plans

by Gideon Rose

JAMES C. SCOTT'S BOOK, *Seeing Like A State* is an important and powerful work that deserves to be read by anyone interested in large-scale public planning. The author, a political scientist and anthropologist at Yale, sets out to discover why so many well-intentioned efforts at social engineering in the twentieth century have misfired so dramatically. After surveying planning disasters around the world, he concludes that the answer lies not in case-specific accidents or faulty execution but rather in the planning project itself.

The thesis of the book is simple. "High modernist ideology," according to Scott, consists of the belief that planners can and should redesign the social order in accordance with supposedly scientific laws. The fatal flaw is always the same: the planners' devotion to broad general rules in preference to practical or local knowledge. For this latter kind of expertise Scott imports the ancient Greek term "metis," the ability to adapt successfully to changing situations that enabled Odysseus to triumph over adversity time and again. High modernist planners, in Scott's view, are so entranced by the aesthetic appeal of precise, universal, "rational" designs that they scorn metis and forget that flesh-and-blood societies are always messy and unique.

Among the book's virtues are its lucid style, deep learning, and wide range of fascinating cases. Scott traces the dire effects of high modernist ideology in realms as diverse as Soviet collectivization, Tanzanian ujamaa villages, scientific forestry,

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industrialized high-yield agriculture, political revolution, and Le Corbusier's city planning. These cases all support the author's basic argument: Disaster generally occurred where planners sacrificed local knowledge and concerns in the ruthless pursuit of some pristine vision of social or economic order.

For all this, however, *Seeing Like A State* is a flawed and frustrating book. It jumps back and forth between banality and exaggeration without zeroing in on a middle position. Sometimes, for example, Scott offers the reader a weak version of his argument: bad things happen when planners are utopian and brutal instead of sensible. If this is the only lesson he has to offer, it is pretty small beer: Is there really anybody out there who thinks forced collectivization was a good idea, or who generally favors utopianism or brutality? The weak version of the argument is also somewhat tautological. Disasters come from overconfidence and blind faith in plans, we are told, with the proof of the planners' blindness and overconfidence being that the experiment ended in disaster.

Yet at other times Scott offers a more radical critique: Bad things happen because planning by its very nature involves the substitution of abstract for local knowledge. Authoritarian high modernism, in this version, does not pervert science or the Enlightenment, but merely carries them to their logical extremes. Here Scott comes close to legitimating militia-like paranoia, suggesting, for instance, that ordinary municipal zoning regulations lie only a few steps up the slippery slope from "concentration camps built in wartime to create and maintain a legible, bounded, concentrated state space." In this mode Scott essentially argues that whenever a peasant and an outside expert disagree over what crops to plant or what farming methods to use, the peasant is bound to be right because he knows his field while all the expert knows is what some guys in white lab coats told him. The result is a profoundly conservative outlook that admits little possibility for beneficial state-led change of any kind.

SEEING LIKE A STATE:
How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed
by James C. Scott
Yale University Press $35

Much of the problem lies in Scott's methodology and case selection. He studied a set of planning disasters and asked what they had in common, and the result is naturally an indictment of planning. What is missing is a set of planning successes, such as modern public health, literacy, or pension programs, and a discussion of what enabled them to succeed. To be sure, Scott tries to flesh out some of his case studies by contrasting "bad" modernists with their "good" critics, but here too he often stacks the deck against plans.

Lenin's conception of a lockstep revolution controlled by a vanguard party, for example, is juxtaposed with Rosa Luxemburg's desire for a more open-ended social transformation involving greater mass participation. The real choice for the socialist movement in the early twentieth century, however, was not between Lenin and Luxemburg, whose naive, unplanned dithering never led to any practical results worth mentioning, but rather between Lenin and Europe's social democrats—many of whom followed careful, well-thought-out plans to political success in democracies across the continent.

In the end, the value of *Seeing Like A State* lies less in its theory than in its cases. These sobering tales drive home just how often in the past benign intentions have led to horrible outcomes, and challenge the reader to come up with a case for why and how future planners can do better. Unless such a case can be made, Scott correctly implies, state officials should adopt the doctors' motto of "first, do no harm" and leave the rest of us in peace.

GIDEON ROSE *is Deputy Director of National Security Studies and Olin Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.*

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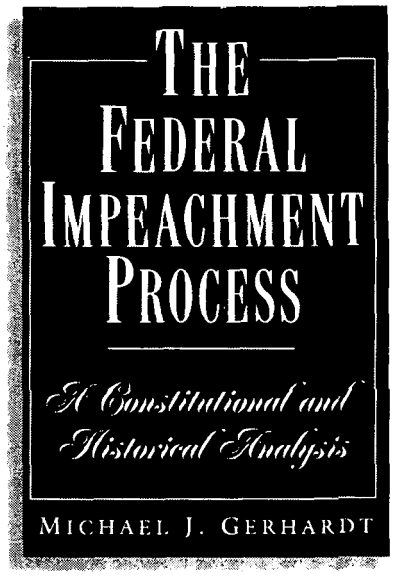

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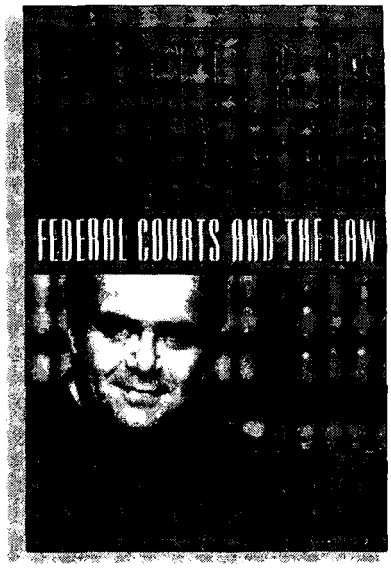

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